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January 2006

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**WHEN THE BEST
PREPARE FOR BATTLE,
THEY CHOOSE THE *V3* HELMET.**



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January

2006

DIRTBIKE
RIDER



Comment

IT'S NOT every day that I get to be proved right so please excuse this 'I told you so' moment – but I told you so...

Last month's comment centred on the problems surrounding supercross in the UK and the inability of all the interested parties to pull together to present a united front. The December issue had been on sale for barely a week when we received a press release stating that the RHL Activities-promoted ACU Datatag British Supercross Championship was cancelled because of 'poor ticket sales'.

At the time it was a bit of a bombshell but once the news had sunk in – about 60 seconds after I opened the email from RHL to be almost precise – it ceased to be a surprise at all. The simple truth is that supercross is a minority sport in the UK. You could argue quite correctly that – at least compared to baseball, basketball, NASCAR etc – it's also a minority sport in America as well. But size really does matter and a minority sport in the US can still draw from a huge potential audience.

There's also the whole thorny issue of effective promotion to a non-SX – ie mainstream – audience but I'm not going to go into that apart from pointing out that we don't enjoy the exposure over here that the sport gets in the States where SX is big, big business.

And AMA SX is the thing we all aspire to, the benchmark, the standard all national supercross championships will always be measured against. It's also an unrealistic goal – try to emulate that and you'll inevitably come away disappointed.

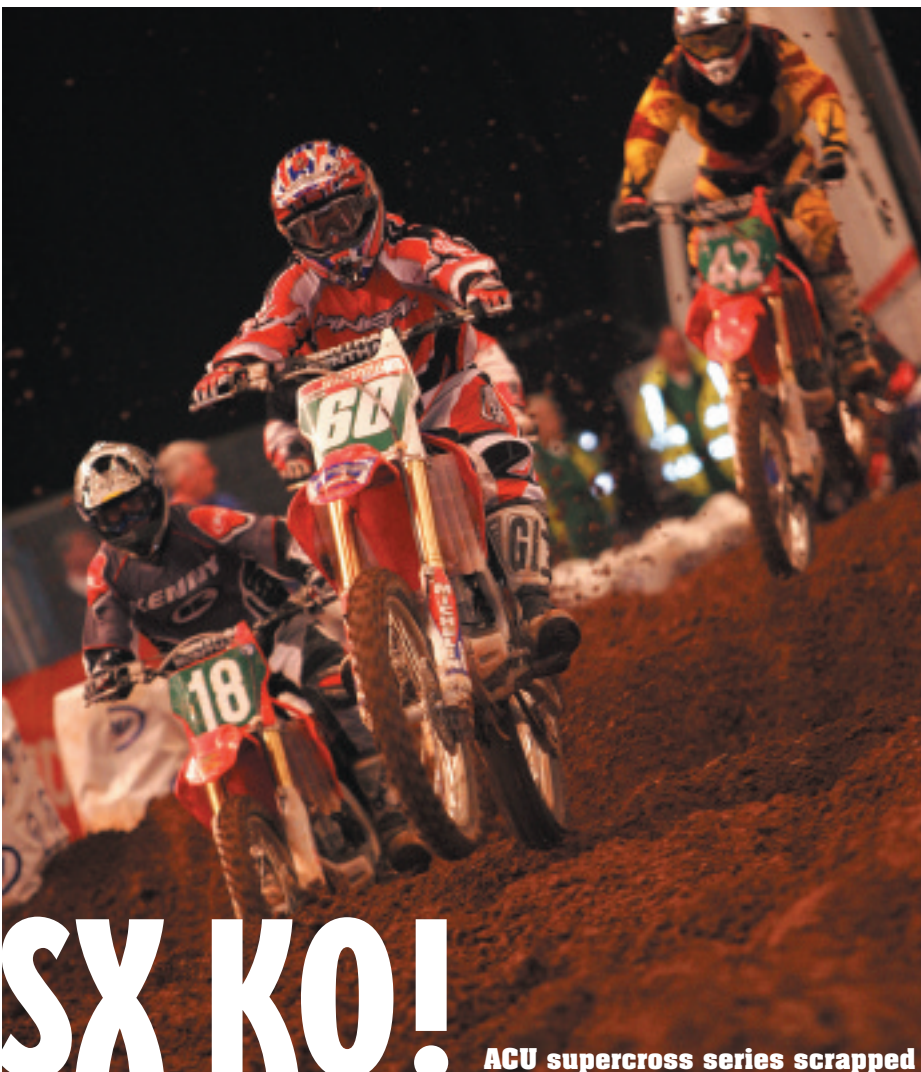
Supercross in the UK would only be classified as Arenacross in the States. Cardiff's Millennium Stadium apart, the venues our various events are held at are not large enough to hold a full-on SX track – or an American-sized crowd for that matter. Sure, we've got plenty of venues big enough – nearly every major city in the country has at least one football stadium that would do the job nicely – but show me a promoter who's willing to risk splashing out on hiring, say, Old Trafford for the evening and I'll show you someone who's about to go bankrupt.

But we don't need to be looking at getting 60,000 bums on seats – well, not yet anyway (and I can only marvel at the guts and enterprise John Hellam and his Future West company show every year by returning to a venue the size of Cardiff).

The sport is only as exciting as the racing and we all know how exciting it can be in the UK. Matt Bates and his Events 22 outfit have shown that with a good track and evenly matched riders supercross is financially viable – the fans turn up, pay their £25, are treated to a night of first-class entertainment, go home feeling they've got value for money and will return the following year for more of the same. And the beauty is they don't have to be full-on petrolheads – or even know anything about the sport – to enjoy the spectacle. And that's where SX has the potential to expand the sport in this country much more than motocross with its muddy fields and sub-standard toilets ever will. And that's why it's so important we get this right.

There is no easy solution but a little bit of common sense would be a good starting point. The ACU bill themselves as the governing body of our sports in the UK and, like it or not, an ACU endorsement does carry credibility when it comes to getting the right riders to the startgate. So how about it Rugby? Swallow some pride, try and rebuild a few burned bridges and make a real effort to get all the interested parties around the table. Base a series around established SX venues in this country, put some of the licence-payers' money into supporting the promoters and start building for the future.

Sean



ACU supercross series scrapped

SUPERCROSS IN the UK soaked up a body blow when promoters RHL Activities Ltd pulled the plug on the entire ACU SX Championship.

The decision to scrap the three-round series – planned for venues in Birmingham, Newcastle and London – was made on November 22, four days before the championship was due to kick off at the NEC.

A brief statement from RHL Activities director Gareth Hockey blamed poor advanced ticket sales for the cancellation. "We would personally like to thank everyone who has worked tirelessly to make this championship happen, many giving their time and services free of charge," says Gareth. "We would also like to thank the riders and spectators who supported the championship and offer them

our sincere apologies."

The news arrived out of the blue – just four days before the bombshell DBR received a press release trumpeting Datatag's title sponsorship deal for the series. And it appears we weren't the only ones caught unaware.

"Obviously, the ACU are very disappointed the championship has had to be cancelled at this late stage as many riders, both youth and adult, have made special arrangements for travelling to the events," states MX committee member Brian Higgins in a press release.

"Whilst we have to respect the commercial decision of promoters who make a huge financial commitment in staging this type of event, the ACU would normally expect to be involved in such an important decision."

DIRTBIKE
RIDER

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WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!

Brian Deegan signed Etnies T-shirts and caps



WINTER'S A comin' and that can only mean that the Winter X Games is gonna be going off real soon too! Metal Mulisha founder Brian Deegan is a former X Games Gold medallist and the Etnies-sponsored athlete is all set to lay it down once more for the troops.

With a possible gold medal ride coming right up, Etnies importer Afour Distribution have hooked us up with some Brian Deegan signed Etnies caps and tees so you can show your love for the Mulisha leader while you catch all the Winter X coverage on TV.

All you've got to do to win one of the three prize packages – that's a cap and a tee – is answer this simple question...

In what year did Brian Deegan take his only AMA 125cc SX Main Event win?

Was it:

- A) 1977
- B) 1997
- C) 1897
- D) 2097
- E) An elephant

When you think you know the answer – and by the way kids it's not a huge-hootered pachyderm – write it down on the back of a postcard, sealed down envelope or a pair of Gary Taylor's stolen trainers and send it to us along with your name, address and a daytime phone number to 'Grrrrrr, I wanna look reet tough in Etnies stuff', DBR, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe, Lancashire, LA4 4AG.

Entries close on January 12 and the first three correct answers drawn from the derelict DBR deep fat fryer of doom on Friday the 13th will each win an Etnies prize package!

Neville Bradshaw's signed Troy Lee Designs race kit

WE HAD serious amounts of money on Motovision Suzuki's Neville Bradshaw to win the ACU British SX Championship. And to celebrate the fact that he didn't not win it we've teamed up with the Nevster and Motovision Suzuki to offer you – our loyal readers – the chance to get your hands on the hunky, chunky spunky South African's Troy Lee Designs pants and jersey combo!

To win Nev's kit all you have to do is answer this easy-as-pie question. What decidedly dodgy nickname have DBR given Neville for no other reason than because we can?

Is it:

- A) The Beast of Bodmin
- B) The Beast from the South East
- C) The Number of the Beast
- D) Beauty and the Beast
- E) A Pint of Your Beast Bitter Please Landlady

When you think you know the answer write it down – along with your name, address and a daytime telephone number – on the back of a postcard, sealed down envelope or a lovely tin of tuna and send it to us at 'Breville Nadshaw comp', DBR, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe, Lancashire, LA4 4AG.

Entries close on January 12 and the first correct answer drawn from one of Gary Taylor's stolen trainers on Friday the 13th will win the kit!

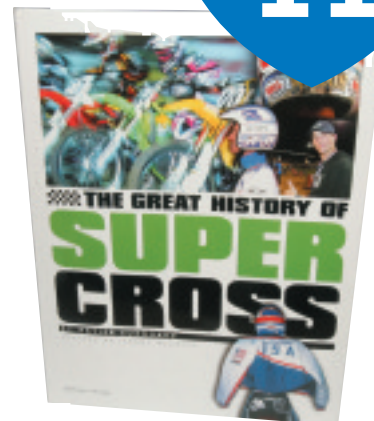


RICHARD FITCH FUND

THE FAMILY and friends of Richard Fitch, who was killed last summer in a crash at Hawkstone Park, have set up a fund to raise money to pay for a permanent memorial at the famous Shropshire venue.

Fund-raising is already well under way and you can do your bit by buying one of these helmet stickers.

Priced at £1, to get your sticker send a postal order, a pound coin taped to a piece of card or a cheque payable to 'Richard Fitch Memorial Fund' along with a SAE to 90 Apple Tree Court, Worle, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset BS22 6BA.



BEST BOOK EVER?

The Great History of Supercross

NEED A last-minute stocking filler that'll make it the best Christmas ever for your best buddy or loved one? Well, if that buddy/loved one's a bookworm or just a grade one supercross fan you may want to consider giving Motovision a call on 01444 882999 and getting hooked up with a copy of the greatest book in t'world – The Great History of Supercross!

The hardback book has an awesome 200 plus pages filled with colour photos and awesome anecdotes from almost 60 years of indoor motocross action and covers everything in the world of supercross from Indianapolis to India! Seriously, this is one of the best books ever and – at £19.99 – would make a worthy addition to anyone's library.

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**Cover: Martin Barr
makes the podium on
Saturday at Belfast...
(Sutty)**

**Contents main image:
...while Downtown Mike
Brown races to second
behind double winner
Tortelli on the Friday
(Sutty)**

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HAWKSTONE INTERNATIONAL MX

Tortelli signs up for pre-season biggie

SALOP MOTOR Club kick off their 80th anniversary celebrations in style on March 5 with the eighth running of their hugely successful Hawkstone Park International MX.

The event's become Europe's #1 pre-season meeting and the '06 invitation-only races will be no exception with two-time world champ Sebastien Tortelli the first big gun to sign up.

And organisers expect nine-time world champ – and Hawkstone regular – Stefan Everts to sign on the line soon which will make for a mouth-watering showdown as Everts looks for revenge on the rider who took the '98 world title from him before heading Stateside.

But it won't be a two-horse race as '05 MX1 runner-up Josh Coppins and the entire CAS Honda squad have agreed terms to race. And the

club's also got British MX2 champ Carl Nunn plus Yamaha's Billy MacKenzie and factory MX1 Kawasaki pilot Stephen Sword high on their shopping list.

Away from the racing a full programme of entertainment is planned plus an extended trade area to keep everyone happy between motos.

Tickets orders and camping booking are being taken in advance with discounted family tickets among the special offers. To beat the rush get in there now by calling 0161 763 6660. For more information check out the event website at www.hawkstonemx.co.uk

Companies looking to book trade stand space or discuss other sponsorship opportunities should contact G2F on the above number or fire off an email to info@g2f.co.uk



GET WELL SOON!

WE'VE BEEN asked by Rick Hanson of the (in)famous racing family to pass on a big get well soon to his son Tom's mate Kieran Chugg.

Kieran – who according to Rick has an all-action style not dissimilar to the legendary Kranky Ken Hanson – severed his arm in a farming accident. Surgeons managed to reattach it but he still faces a tough battle to get back on a bike.

So get well soon Kieran – and that's not just from the Hansons, it's from everyone who knows you and us lot up north in the DBR office as well...

WIRRAL DEAL

GB HARE scrambles daddies Wirral Off Road have renewed their deal with Motul who will remain as official sponsor for their '06 painfest.

WOR sadist-in-chief Steve Ireland's a happy bunny (boiler)! "It's great to be going into a second year with Motul and I'm really proud that WOR are doing enough to please our sponsors and regain their valued support – some other sponsors are also on board for the 2006 season and these will be announced very shortly."

For the latest WOR news visit their website at www.wirraloffroad.com



MINI NUNNY!

KTM release MX2 replicas

FANCY GETTING your paws on a scaled-down replica of Carl Nunn's British MX2 Championship winning Champ 250F KTM? Well you can...

KTM have just released limited edition versions of their schoolie range to mark Nunny's epic '05 season with the line-up comprising the 50 Mini Adventure, 50 Senior Adventure, 50SX, 65SX and both the small and big-wheeled versions of the 85SX.

The mini Nunny replicas all carry an exclusive Champ KTM decal kit complete with Carl's #8 plate and come fitted with – depending on the model – WP Marzocchi and Paioli suspension plus a sprinkling of other trick bits.

Nunny knows a good thing when he sees one. "At a first glance the bikes look just like a shrunken down version of our factory machines," he reckons, "and having ridden the 65SX the performance of the bike is factory too!"



Nunny's outgrown his SX-F250



TESTING TIMES

DOUGIE LAMPKIN – aided by Amos Bilbao, Ben Hemingway and Wayne Braybrook – laid on some expert tuition at the first ever Sandiford Montesa Test Day at the end of November.

Over 100 riders from all over Britain rolled up at the Coniston Hotel near Skipton and took the opportunity to swing a leg over the '06 Cota 4RT. As well as some top technique tips from the quartet of star riders, factory technician David Bertran found himself flat-out all day demonstrating the potential of the new programmable throttle body.

And multiple British sidecar champ Robin Luscombe even put in a guest appearance to give Amos the ride of his life.



WRITING AN article takes a fair bit of planning. You ideally need to have been at the event, interviewed the rider or in this case watched the TV show to have a snowball in hell's chance of knocking together a few words. Well I did get something sent through about MotoPIG...50 words of extreme sports clichés including a new one on me – wheel-wizzing.

Reading between the lines this is what I believe they were trying to say. An ingenious take on the basketball game HORSE, MotoPIG brings together 16 FMX riders for a knockout tournament. This game of one-upmanship starts with a rider doing a trick which has to be matched by his opponents, if he doesn't land it he gets the letter P and so on until everyone's a PIG and you have a 'wheel-wizzing' winner. Just as well they can make a TV show better than they write their press releases!

Tune in for the premiere on Thursday January 19 at 8:30pm. Stuart Clapp

HIGH ROLLER!

Knighter signs off '05 in style by winning big at the Las Vegas Maxxis Endurocross

Words and photos by Jonty Edmunds

HE'S ALREADY pretty much won everything in the world of enduros in '05 and David Knight puts on a dominant display of indoor enduro racing at the Orleans Arena in Las Vegas to become the AMA Endurocross national champion.

"I couldn't have asked for a better way to end my season," admits Manx ace David Knight following a solid race win in front of a sell-out crowd in Las Vegas. "There were so many great riders competing this year that I knew winning wouldn't be easy. But I knew I could win. I just got my head down and pushed hard. Winning an AMA title to go with my FIM title is awesome."

Brought to the ground in the first turn of his heat race, Knighter fails to pass straight to the Main Event and finds himself back on track for his semi final race which he wins easily.

"My heat was a disaster," admits DK. "I got taken out in the first turn and hurt my clutch arm. I couldn't hold on in the race and really struggled. I tried my best to qualify but I just couldn't catch the leaders. Thankfully, my semi final race went well – I got a good start and won it quite easily."

In the Main Event Knighter comes up against some of the States' and Europe's best enduro and off-road riders – and makes most of them look like they're out for a Sunday afternoon trail ride.

Starting cautiously he rounds the first turn almost last then almost gets brought down as he tries to go around the outside of turn two. But Knighter soon starts passing riders and moving himself up the leaderboard, gathering momentum lap on lap. As those around him try too hard to pass each other, the technical and unforgiving track catches more than a few riders out – including '04 event winner Ryan Hughes.

Needing just over two laps to hit the front, David knows the win is his for the taking having passed close to all the field and having seen Ryno stuck in one of the rock sections. Able to keep an eye on those behind him as the race reaches the halfway point, Knighter eases off slightly during the second half of the race and claims the win.

"I'm so pleased to have won," admits DK. "I wanted to prove that I could win after finishing second in '04 and it feels great to have done that. I saw a few riders make mistakes and I just kept pushing hard until I got to the front. Then I just made sure I didn't make any mistakes."

results

ENDUROCROSS

- | | | |
|----|----------------|------------|
| 1 | David Knight | (KTM) |
| 2 | John Dowd | (Suzuki) |
| 3 | Ricky Dietrich | (Kawasaki) |
| 4 | Ty Davis | (Yamaha) |
| 5 | Ivan Cervantes | (KTM) |
| 6 | Ryan Dudac | (Kawasaki) |
| 7 | Kurt Caselli | (KTM) |
| 8 | Mike Lafferty | (KTM) |
| 9 | Ryan Hughes | (Suzuki) |
| 10 | Xavier Galindo | (KTM) |

Knighter stuffs them all in Vegas!



Defending champ Ryno Hughes (#1) and John Dowd go bar-to-bar across the tyres





SK-1 VENTED RACERMIT
VIPER JERSEY
ATOM GLOVE

ADULT SIZES: 28" - 38"
ADULT SIZES: S" - XXL"
ADULT SIZES: S" - XXL"

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ALLOYMX
SX-1 VENTED RACEPANT | BROCHEPLER
SPRING2006

LAST MAN STANDING

IT'S THE sort of event that exists purely to cause pain to numpties daft enough to enter it with the added bonus of beefing up the spares market at a flat part of the year. The recent Red Bull-backed Last Man Standing in Texas lived up to all expectations – and then some – and was won by a certain David Knight. Well, he's won just about everything else this year...

Photo by Hoppenworld.com/
Shannon Faulk



MARTIN BARR

The next big thing for Irish MX?

PIT BEIRER

Life after racing for the German star





next MONTH

RIDE MX FACTOR!

Win a supported Yamaha ride for the year courtesy of Ride MX and DBR

Plus... Cardiff SX, DVD guide, the great Gary Taylor's missing trainers mystery and the industry's main movers and shakers reveal their favourite dinosaurs!



ON SALE

January 13





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THE GREAT OUTDOORS: THE CONSTANT WAR



The Great Outdoors — The Constant War

The latest and greatest version of The Great Outdoors — The Constant War — takes viewers and drops them right into the boots of the world's best motocross pilots. Done in classic "fly on the wall" sports journalism style, The Great Outdoors goes far deeper and far more inside than any motocross film that has come before.

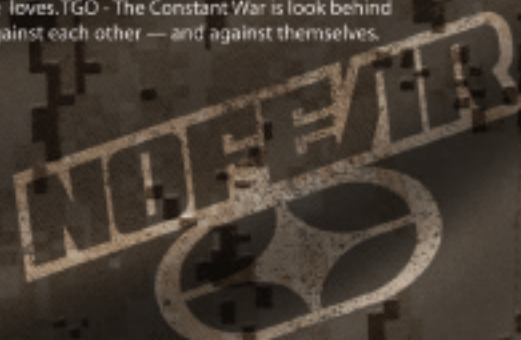
Unprecedented in scope, throughout the entire summer, candid moments are caught by the film crew, uncovering the real life truth and meaning of 2005 AMA National Championship Series. Beginning with round one in Sacramento, California, the producers of TGO select an individual rider, and his mechanic, attach microphones to them, then let the film roll. What results are compelling, intimate storylines portraying the human drama that is so much a part of professional motocross. Going places the ordinary fan cannot, TGO ventures far beyond the snow fence surrounding the racetracks of the AMA series to capture the good, the bad — the hope and the glory — of racing.

Along the way on the 12 stop tour, James Stewart sits down for an exclusive interview, not holding back about the emotional roller coaster ride that was his rookie season in the 250 division. Ivan Tedesco talks of exceeding his expectations to rise to the top of the 125 class. The iconic Doug Henry, once again, shows up before his legion of fans at Southwick, his heart on his jersey sleeve. Team KTM is shadowed at the Glen Helen season finale, which ultimately turned to be one of the most dramatic title showdowns in the 30-year history of U.S. motocross. And of course there is all the amazing high-speed and slow-motion footage that has made TGO the most popular serial DVD series of all-time. The talent and athleticism portrayed by Ricky Carmichael, Kevin Windham, Chad Reed, Grant Langston, Mike Alessi, Davi Millsaps, David Willemin, as well as a cast of thousands, in the film are equally astonishing and inspiring.

But perhaps the most engaging segment of the TGO — The Constant War is that which features retiring veteran John Dowd. The crew follows the 39 year-old's farewell season where he says one last goodbye to his fans, friends and the sport that he loves. TGO — The Constant War is look behind the curtain of the relentless, never ending battle motocross racers must face against the elements, against each other — and against themselves.

TGO™ THE CONSTANT WAR™
STYLE # 5023D

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
NO FEAR MX DIVISION AT +33 442.163.604
WWW.NOFEARMX.COM



"It's depressing being back in the cold weather but it's time to knuckle down to a hard winter's training... I've got one more test on the new bike before Christmas - the team's heading down to the South of France for some suspension and engine testing"

Knuckling down!

With a big year ahead on a new bike in a new class, Stevie's cracking on with his pre-season testing



HI EVERYONE and thanks for reading my column again. As the Crock Star said in his column last month, 'the off-season is open' – bike shows, supercross events and all that kind of stuff.

I chose to give the SXs a miss this time around so I could let all my small injuries have a good rest and start preparing for next year. I was kindly asked by the Portsmouth SSC to come down and present the trophies to their club members – they were a great bunch and I'd like to thank them for their warm welcome.

The next day I was going on holiday for two weeks in the UAE so I was busy packing and taking the rabbit and the dogs round to the babysitters before rushing off to Gatwick. I had a fantastic time and it was very relaxing. It was also special in that me and my girlfriend got engaged so it was a great holiday to remember.

It's a bit depressing being back in the cold weather with the dark mornings but it's time to knuckle down to a hard winter's training. I've got one more test on the new bike before Christmas – the team is heading down to the South of France for some suspension and engine testing for three days. This way when we start up in the New Year we should have a good base. I'm already quite happy with the bike and confident we will have an awesome machine – apart from being a bit heavier to move around it's just like riding a 250F with twice the power.

For '06 I'm staying with the same sponsors – Pro Grip, Alpinestars and my personal sponsors like Road Wheel, 12 Inch, Fro Systems, Ford and a new sponsor, Cannondale, who are giving me cycles. I picked up the two

bikes recently – one's a mountain bike and the other's a road bike. I was like a kid with new toys when I got them and went out for a pedal straight away.

While I'm on the subject of sponsors I better take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped me throughout the season – so cheers!

With Christmas just around the corner I took advantage of the duty free while on holiday. I'll probably be going back up the road to Scotland for Christmas but I'm not sure where I'll be spending New Year yet.

I went back up to Marshfield to visit some friends the other week. We ended up in a comedy club in Bristol and had a great laugh. One of the stand up comedians was Scottish and was very funny. I'm a big fan of Billy Connolly and usually get his DVD every year for Christmas.

Not a lot else has been happening really – I've just been relaxing at home and doing a bit of DIY around the house. I'm starting to paint some of the house next week so that should be fun – NOT!

On December 10 MotoXtreme are holding their annual shop open day at Marshfield – if you can make it you should as it's a great day. Last year there was a prize for whoever could take the back wheel out of a bike, place it on the floor and then replace it in the fastest time. There were about 10 of us trying for hours to beat the best time that was something silly like 25 seconds.

Hopefully I'll see some of you there...

Words by Stephen Sword Photo by Suttu



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Stevie
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"In Belfast I got to speak to Sebastien Tortelli a little and I must say he's a really dead-on guy. I've always thought a lot of him and would list him as one of my heroes - especially during the years he had in Europe on Kawasaki"



Season's greetings!

It's better to be a giver, not a receiver - so Gordy's hoping to hand out some bone-crunching tackles at the annual Dromore charity football match...

RIGHT NOW I'm feeling pretty sick and I wish I was lying in my bed getting healthy. I feel like I've had a cold now for nearly three weeks - my throat is raw and my nose is running like a tap. Lovely, eh? But I guess you know what it feels like as living in the UK in the winter makes colds pretty unavoidable.

I raced the supercross in Belfast last weekend feeling like this and I've got to race this weekend at the Cardiff SX too. Hopefully I'll be better soon...

In Belfast I got to speak to Sebastien Tortelli a little and I must say he's a really dead-on guy. I've always thought a lot of him and would list him as one of my heroes - especially during the years he had in Europe on Kawasaki. In my dreams I'd love to do battle with him for GP victory some day and, like you often hear, dreams can come true!

Russell's Motorcycles kindly lent me a bike to ride in Belfast and Gibber turned the spanners once again. Craig at DEP sent me a pipe as I was on a 250 two-stroke and needed a bit more *braaap* and Justin Reid brought along his Fun Mover truck so we could work in the back of it as it was snowing outside on and off. So thanks to all and everyone who helped me - it was much appreciated.

Cardiff will be the last ride I have on the Yamaha and then I'm taking a break from bikes until January. Next year is going to be a busy one and I've a lot to do to put things right. I went to the show in Milan to put some deals together and was at Stoneleigh for a day to get some things finalised too. Bit by bit things are taking shape and time is passing by very quickly which often is a sign of a high productivity levels!

In between these priorities I've put all my spare time into riding my trials bike. Robert Crawford lives about two miles from my front door so we meet mid-week for some quality handlebar time. I can learn so much from him as he's on a much higher level than me and I thrive on the satisfaction of improving my own skills. Through one thing or another I've

only managed to make it to one competition where I had a great day and finished fifth overall. The next one I'll do will be on Boxing Day - I always do it as it's in my home town of Newtownards.

Mentioning Boxing Day reminds me of all the usual Christmas fun, including the annual charity football match held at Dromore Rugby Club. This year it's on the evening of December 28 and the post-match fun kicks off with a fund-raising auction in the clubhouse. Last year over £4000 was raised and many items from all sides of the motorcycling family were donated. This created a superb situation for lots of people to prove that they hadn't got short arms and deep pockets!

This will be the fifth year the event's been held and if all goes to form a big lump of cash won't be the only thing that gets raised - there will also be raised heart rates, tempers, egos, fists and red cards. More fightball than football! This year I'm going to bring my helmet! Seriously though, it's a good event and your support is appreciated!

This past month has been quiet enough really but that suits me okay as I can get on with so many other things I usually don't have a chance to. I'm also planning on heading off to the sun for 10 days with Amy to

have a break and recharge the batteries before the January programme kicks in.

Like everyone else I find Christmas shopping a nightmare but I do enjoy the Belfast buzz running about the streets at the last minute.

Okay, I've got to go and wash and prep my bike for Cardiff now so sorry if the content of my column this time is a bit slack - I'm becoming an expert at being vague - but I can't tell you everything I've done, do and am going to do now, can I?

Words by Gordon Crockard Photo by Toby Fuller



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"I've decided that all the travelling and the cost of the WEC have made it too difficult for myself and the team to continue so for '06 I will be focusing more on the UK events, indoor races and flying across the pond to chase some GNCC dollars"



Shake up!

With another season over Eddy's planning ahead for '06 - and there are some big changes in store

SO FINALLY the season is over and I can now look forward to 2006. All-in-all it's not been a bad year as far as results are concerned although maybe I could have done a little bit better in the WEC. We've all seen the achievements of Knighter this year and I must say congratulations to him - I'm sure this will be the first of many titles for the boy.

Anyhow, for myself things are changing - big time! I've decided that all the travelling and the cost of the WEC have made it too difficult for myself and the team to continue in the WEC. So for '06 I will be focusing more on the UK events, indoor races and flying across the pond to chase some GNCC dollars!

It's been a hard decision to make but I feel from a privateer's point of view the WEC is too costly regarding travelling. Next season with races in Sweden, USA, Canada and Greece I'll need rather a large wallet to be doing the events - too large in fact. So that leaves me out and I'm really fired up to be racing against Juha Salminen again.

For '06 I'll continue with nearly all my sponsors and will be calling the team PAR Honda. Paul Rowlands is boss man and joining me are Paul Whibley and young Simon Wakely who has had some cracking results for us this season. Whibs will be back and I guess he will also be doing some races in the USA as Paul (Rowlands) is really keen for us to go and give the Yanks some abuse - or at least try to!

You've probably heard that I've just won the BEC which I'm very happy about, although Knighter wasn't there due to other demands. But I'm still pleased to have won a major UK title and I'm sure that I'll again have my hands full defending the crown in '06. I'll be sticking with the CR250 for all events next year and plan on changing nothing from this year's set up.

Onto the Fast Eddy race series front and you will see quite a few changes - the first one being that Putoline Oil have come onboard as the title sponsor so we are changing the name to the Putoline UKXC Championship. It's something that we'd been thinking about doing for a while but now seems the right time to do it. Also, by finding a big sponsor we can now put all the funds into prize money, trophies and a new website. The plan is to have a six-round championship with all rounds to count running from March through to August, giving everyone a bit of time off towards the end of the season.

So what else has been happening? Well before the John Banks I went along to the Stoneleigh Show and saw a few people. The show was very impressive and some of the stands looked really smart and professional. It was good to see that the teams were there showing off the bikes and trucks - just a shame they were outside as it was a bit too cold for me.

Anyway, my plan is to have December off, get rid of our team bikes and make way for a fresh start. Finally, I would just like to thank the following people for all their help - PJB, Roger, Paul, Fordy, Karl, Ufo, Putoline and all other technical sponsors.

Have a great Christmas and have a JD for me...



Words by Paul Edmondson Photo by Honda

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"The mixture of high class international supercross racing blended with one slice of pro/celebrity minibikes, two parts freestyle and a sprinkling of future youth stars really hit the spot"



Inside job!

It's brass monkeys outside but luckily the action in the Odyssey Arena's red, red hot

NOW THAT'S Entertainment! Bikes, babes and back-flips were the key words on the pre-event posters and boy did Mr Bates and his crew deliver or what!

The mixture of high class international supercross racing blended with one slice of pro/celebrity minibikes, two parts freestyle and a sprinkling of future youth stars really hit the spot. Check out Hung-Sutty's full-on report and pictures in this issue of DBR. Keen as mustard, the big man was out in the trenches both nights risking life and limb to bring you the best shots possible (he does take a fine shot – SL).

I myself risked the health of my liver by visiting the Embo Racing box on Saturday night – good to see you big man and I hope you didn't need your puncture repair kit this year.

From our side of the pond one young man in particular made a lot of new fans at the Odyssey. Martin Barr capped off what has been a fantastic season with a stellar performance in front of a sell-out crowd. The Bike-it/Dixon rider bolted out of the gate all weekend and running with some of the world's finest supercross riders will give Barr even more confidence as he aims for a full season of British champs and GPs in 2006.

In his penultimate outing aboard Yamaha GC showed form – his speed was good enough for second place in one moto but he was involved in several incidents which ultimately hindered his progress to the front.

Riding the full track on 10 inch wheels brought with it some problems for the riders and a truckload of laughs for the spectators as the pro/celebrity minibike race got underway. Andrew 'O'Show' O'Brien may just have found his vocation in life as he battled with eventual winner – and former world champ – Jamie Dobb.

Many of the top Tarmac guys let it all hang out with Michael Laverty being the fastest of the slick brigade – was it down to his skill or the Holeshoot-prepped Monster brand mini-racer?

And speaking of champions, Ulster champ Simon Reid showed the determination that's becoming his trademark. His dad Brian was a nervous wreck as he watched Simon attack the full supercross circuit on his KTM 65.

The only downside to the entire Odyssey experience

was the weather and anybody who had the misfortune to be outside was instantly turned into a Smurf – that's blue in colour. Matt Bates seemed to have everything covered but the weather so come on man, pick it up for next year and book a little November sunshine.

By now the Christmas trees will be lighting up every house – in fact, the Griswald Christmas house decoration

challenge will move up another gear. The national power grid will struggle to keep up with the increasing demand from the ever-competitive urban male who's determined to have the brightest garden on the planet.

Last year our neighbours' house was lit up like an airport runway which as you can imagine caused a few sleepless nights as the odd 747 buzzed overhead awaiting clearance to land. Junior will receive his new power beast come the 25th and the talk around the table will be of the forthcoming campaign and just how we can spend more money developing the latest offering from Japan. You wonder just when the factories will get it right?

I can't believe just how quickly time flies by as the New Year is fast approaching and 2005 will be remembered for many things – some which touched and changed lives forever. While motorcycling has always been my passion it could not go unmentioned

that Ireland witnessed the passing of a legend.

George Best was an icon. Now some may see him as a victim, others a hero, for me somewhere in between is the truth. George may not have lived long enough to receive his letter from the Queen but he packed more into his life than pretty much anybody. I never had the pleasure of meeting him personally but the tributes and stories that have appeared in the media give a reason to smile for he was truly a great character.

As you eat your turkey, open presents and celebrate Christmas take a moment to reflect on the year gone by. As I say, a new year brings with it a new start. From all at DBR we wish you a happy, prosperous and peaceful 2006...

Words by Stevie Mills Photo by Sutty

Dubliner Stuart Edmonds flies at The Odyssey



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GOT SOMETHING TO SAY? Well here's where you should be saying it...

AMCA info

My names Ash, I'm 15 and I live in South Yorkshire. I'm wanting to start racing next season with the AMCA but I don't know how much a licence is and how much it would cost per race. I need to persuade my dad to let me race but he says it's too expensive. Hopefully this will get published in your magazine and he'll see how much I want to do this.

Ash, South Yorkshire

Your best bet is to contact the AMCA office direct by email on amca.office@btinternet.com because there are plenty of licence options available to suit individual needs. The type of licence you have affects the amount you have to pay for a race entry. Then there's your local club subs to take into account too. We reckon it's probably no more expensive to race AMCA than it is to go to a practice track each and every weekend.

Think pink!

My name is Joel Firth (Joelshot), I'm aged 14 and I ride a KTM 125. I have made a team called Team Swissy and me and my mates need some gear – helmets, kit, goggles, armour etc. The only problem is the Team Swissy colours are bright pink and black because the girls like it. We cannot find any good Team Swissy colour kits anywhere. Could you please help us for Swissy?

Joelshot, England

Hey Joelshot! You'll be glad to know that Wulfsport are bringing out some awesome kit in Team Swissy colours although we're led to believe that they just call it pink and black. Give Bill Brown and the boys a call on 01900 873456 and he'll hook you right up.

Why Mike, why?

My name is Greg Fisher and I'd really like to know why Mike Alessi doesn't do the AMA supercross? He's doing all these British

supercross races and winning them easily yet he doesn't do any in America!

Greg, Cumbria

PS Thanks to Suttly for helping me at the recent Sheffield Supercross!

Mike held back from racing supercross last year because Jeff wasn't old enough to race in the Pro ranks and the Alessi family thought it would be beneficial to keep both boys racing together. As far as we can tell they'll both be racing the West Coast championship of the AMA Supercross Lites – or the 125 class as it used to be known.

We can't believe that you managed to get Suttly to help you in Sheffield – we thought he was nothing more than a lazy, fat *****! Shows how you can be wrong about people, eh...

Upgrade

I'm in need of some real good advice! I've been thinking of upgrading my bike – a TTR125 – to a 250 and I have three bikes in mind. I've been looking at a YZ250 and have heard that they are extremely good – I've seen quite a few and they look amazing but I have heard that two-strokes are dying out. Please say this isn't so.

The other two bikes I've been looking at are the YZ250F and the KTM250F. Which one of these would you say would be better to buy? Any advice would be much appreciated.

Chris, via email

We're expecting two-strokes to come back strong soon at a clubman level. In fact there was recent news that four-stroke bikes have been totally banned from the Wilden Lane circuit, a popular Midlands winter venue, because of complaints about excessive noise – and this is from bikes that meet the current sound limits.

All three of the bikes you're looking at would be a good buy but the power increase from

Join the club!



I'll start from the beginning. I've watched and loved motocross for years now and finally could afford my first bike at the beginning of this year when I finished my apprenticeship as a car mechanic. So I went and bought a brand new KTM450SX.

My boxers wouldn't fit over my nappy the first time my dad took me to a practice track but by the end of the day I began to thoroughly enjoy myself. Since then I have been practising as much as I can but I feel now I've had enough of just practising and next year I'm hoping to race.

Unfortunately, I don't know many people in this wonderful sport and was hoping you might know who to put me in touch with in order to join a club. I live in Southend on Sea in Essex.

Graham, Essex

You're very lucky to live within the boundaries of the ACU Eastern Centre – an area that's populated with great tracks – and the South Eastern and South Midland Centres are only a stone's throw away too. Check out www.easternacu.info for everything you need to know – there's even contact details on there for the Southend and District MCC. Good luck!

your TTR to a YZ250 might be a bit much. Both the Yamaha and KTM 250 four-strokes are great bikes although the reliability of the KTM has yet to be proved as it was a new model in '05.

Where's Woody?

We all know your mag is the best – that's why I'm asking you where can I get a set of Throttle Jockey Woody Woodpecker graphics for my CRF50.

Dom, Cambridgeshire

We're struggling a bit to find a UK dealer for Throttle Jockey products Dom but BTO Sports in America have them in stock and are more than ready to mail 'em out to the UK. Type www.btosports.com into your web browser and shop away.



Ray rumbled

Dearest DBR, please can you tell me how come Rage editor

Chussy looks absolutely nothing like the cartoon picture of him on his new logo?

Katy, Tunstall

We would but we have no frickin' idea...



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Yohooo – nice racks ladies! Anyhoo...the little red numbers are from the Starchild range while the black beauties are the Black Gothic Boy Beater and the Black Gothic tee. All items are available in a variety of sizes so they'll fit almost every hot honey nationwide. Check out the all-new Freestylextreme website for more top stuff from an awesome array of cool clothing companies.

Price: Starchild vest £14.99

Starchild thong £5.99

Black Gothic Boy Beater £14.99

Black Gothic Tee £17.99

Supplier: freestylextreme.com

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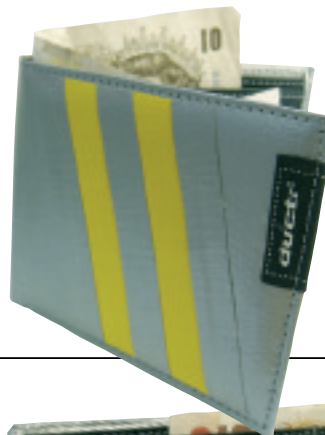
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1 With Scotty Columb still on his way over from New Zealand young June steps up to fill the Kiwi's spot for this Hooper Suzuki team shot

2 Carl Nunn tries to hide the fact he fudged up shaving his goatee by standing next to this oh-so-pretty Minibikepro-built minibike

3 Chavtastic! Spy goggles are great but somebody please have a word with their designer...

4 Forks for everything from minis to 650cc motards can be found at Marzocchi

5 Dan Clark and James Dabill put

on one hell of a trials show in the Live Arena

6 Lee at D-Zign had loads of trick helmets on show including this Shoei VFX-R that now belongs to Glen Dragon who's the winner of our 'Win a Custom Helmet' competition that we ran in conjunction with Shoei and D-Zign

7 Sirens used to beckon sailors to their death on jagged rocks but these days they're simply employed to seduce motofans into attending the biggest race of the year – the 2006 Motocross des Nations at Matterley Basin on September 23/24

FREEZING FOG and sub-zero conditions don't stand in the way of almost 21,000 dirt bike enthusiasts who venture to Stoneleigh to visit Europe's #1 purely off-road show.

The 2005 Dirt Bike Show is bigger, better and more successful than ever before as a mixture of '06 bikes, top stars, new products and more all help make this year's show way better than previous editions.

An all-new virtual paddock sets the scene for what's inside as the Bike-It Dixon Yamaha, CAS Honda, Hooper Suzuki and Molson Kawasaki rigs are all on display but most of the good stuff is in the much warmer halls. With new bikes from each and every major manufacturer on show – including Aprilia who make their debut visit to an off-road show – from all fields of off-road competition there is something for everyone to feast their eyes on in halls one and two while there's plenty of purchasing in the mostly retail-only hall three.

Out in the Live Arena Dan Clark masterminds (who would have ever thought the words 'Dan', 'Clark' and 'masterminds' would be



4

Rush Racing

GO-FASTER GOODIES!

The guys at Rush Racing are flat out all weekend as punters pack their stand to check out the latest offerings from FMF, One Industries and EVS. Most attention is focussed towards American tuning wizards FMF who have two red hot new products on show – the MegaBomb and new twin tail-pipes for CRF250s. The MegaBomb is a titanium header pipe that not only kills noise by working as a pre-muffler – reducing noise levels by up to 2db – but also helps the engine make more power in the bottom to mid-range. The Alessi boys have been running MegaBombs on their factory KTM race bikes in the States and are both reported to be well pleased – at least that's what Scott 'Chi Chi' Wadman from Rush reckons.



5



6



7



DISHING THE DIRT!

Bigger, better, more successful – the 2005 Dirt Bike Show is an off-road record-breaker

Words and photos by Sully

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8



9



10



11



12



13



14



15

8 Brand-new ally framed two and four-fiddies had the crowds flocking to the Yamaha stand
9 The guys at Technology in Motion are kept super-busy all weekend fitting people up with knee and wrist braces from the CTi range
10 British engineering at its best - who'd have thought something so trick could start its life in Zumerzet!
11 How trick is that anodised ally petrol tank? And what about the oversize ally rads too? It seems that big bad Dave Gooch (not pictured)

over at GMX really knows a thing or too about making trick ally bits
12 If you hang around at the show for long enough you're bound to see something out of the ordinary at some point or other. The highlight of the show for anyone (okay, the highlight of the show for me!) who saw it was watching Motul's model Nadia bouncing up and down on this Motostik. Check out DBR new products for more information on the motocross-inspired pogo sticks real soon...

13 "Twins!" yells our technical editor Geoff Walker uncontrollably whenever the Datatag girls approach him - showgirl tourettes is a terrible thing and is unfortunately incurable!
14 One Industries helmets - perfect protection for headcases everywhere
15 "Laydees and gentlemen, I give you..." The lovely Dale Hall from 661/Sunline/Arnette proudly shows us the all-new red-soled SixSixOne boots which perfectly compliment his blinging gold watch!

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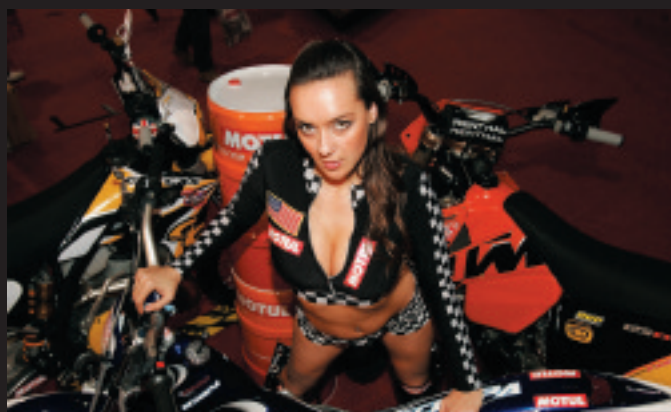
DBR live stage

PS2 CHALLENGE

Pro racers and show visitors alike battle it out on the DBR live stage to set the fastest lap around the Boston supercross circuit on THQ's mega MX Vs ATV Unleashed.

And the top prize goes to 12-year-old Alex Meadows from Northamptonshire who picks up a DBR calendar, DBR director's chair, PS2 console and game. Tom Church is the fastest of our 'star' riders but even TC – who, let's be honest, gets to sit around playing his PS2 lots while he's recovering from injury – is a whopping seven seconds down on Alex.

In between bouts of the PS2 Challenge Kira and the girls entertain the show crowd by strutting their stuff on the DBR-sponsored stage.



17



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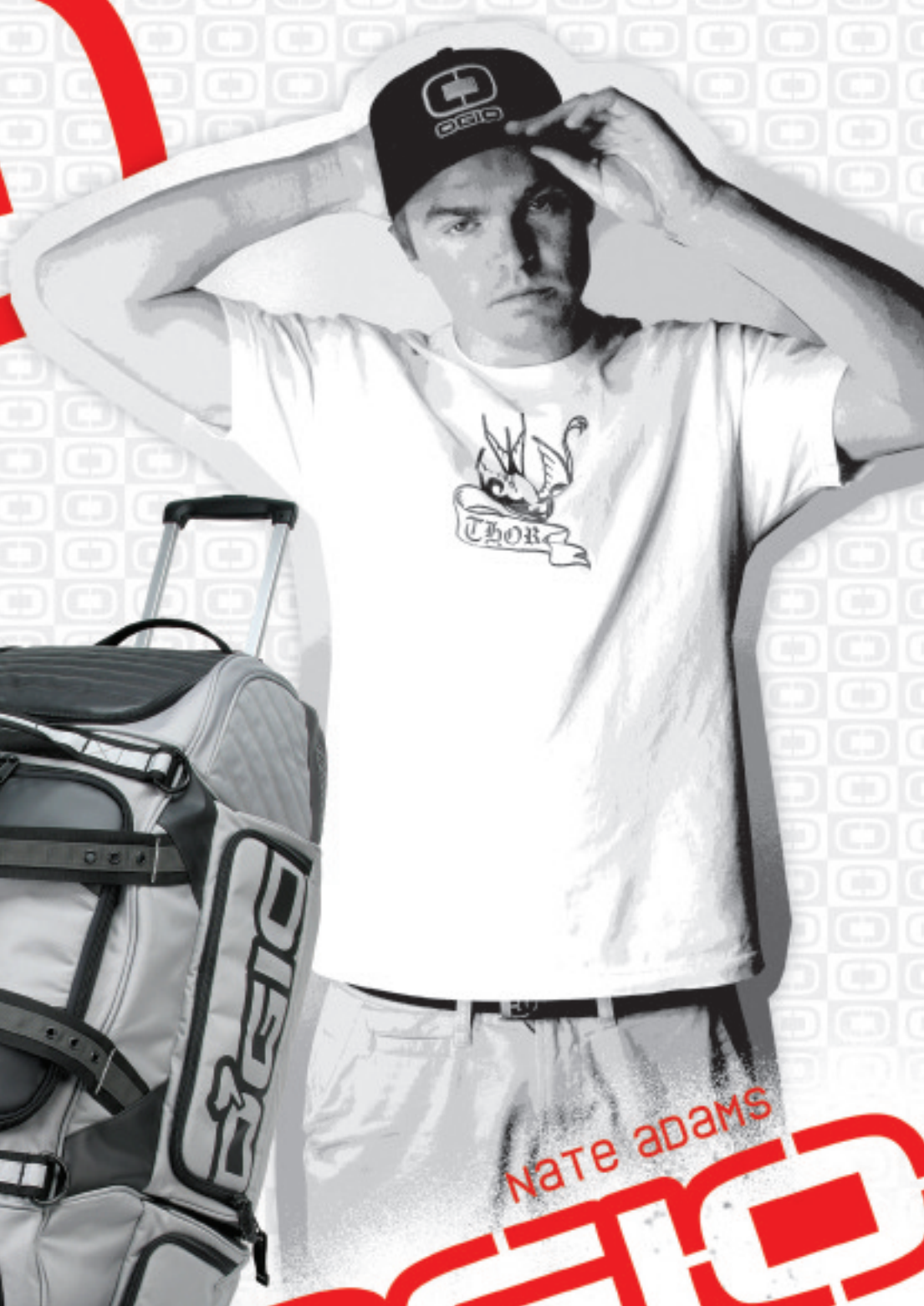


16: Shirty pulled out all the stops to trick up this Ohlins-shod EC250 then Suttty goes and gets a lycra shod promo princess to stand right in front of it. Oops!

17: One day Nadia's gonna be the new Mrs Sutton but until then you can catch her curves over at Motul

18: Tom Yorke is the new kid on the custom graphics block but we've already heard great things about his work and he seems like a top bloke too!

19: Glamour-boy Gary Taylor pulls off a perfect back-flip in a minibike freestyle show of epic proportions



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20

Fox Europe

COMEBACK KINGS!

Fox Europe make an Elvis-esque comeback to the Dirt Bike Show after being absent for a year or so. As well as returning with their full range of race, foot and casual wear they also have RC's MXdN winning helmet on show which is up for grabs in a great show competition.



21



22



23



used in the same sentence) an action-packed show that features trials and minibike trickery as well as some roadie-style bike stunts from Hungarian entertainer Zoltan Angyal.

More entertainment can be found back in the warmth at the DBR stage where the DBR/THQ fastest lap challenge has show visitors and star racers on the edge of their seats as they try to throw down the fastest lap on top moto game MX Vs ATV Unleashed.

The consensus from both the public and trade exhibitors is that the 2005 Dirt Bike Show's a corker and with next year's date already set – November 16-19 – you just know we'll be in for more of the same in 12 months time.

20: Doing the Dakar rallye is no easy task as Honda's Mick Extance was prepared to tell anyone who popped by the Honda stand for a wee chat. For the next edition of the legendary desert race Mick plans to run this fully-prepped version of Honda's CRF450

21: If you can imagine Roger Harvey stepping into Tina Turner's shoes then you can also probably conjure up the imagery that this Honda dome is just

like the Thunderdome except with less violence and a couple or so more dirt bikes

22: It's all about British MX2 Champ Carl Nunn on the KTM stand as his championship winning machine and a bunch of replicas – 50, 65 and 85cc machines – litter the Austrian marque's display area

23: Sutt's just not shy when it comes to showing the promo girls the poses he wants from them

STATE OF PLAY

The man behind the sadly defunct UKSX series, Matt Bates now spearheads Everts 22's Belfast Supercross efforts. We caught up with him after two nights at the Odyssey Arena to get his take on the state of the sport in the UK...

Words by Suttly

MATT BATES is the main man behind Events 22 – the promotion company behind the Belfast Supercross. DBR took five minutes out of some important drinking time to talk with Matt about the Belfast event and the state of British supercross in general.

DBR: *This surely must be one of the most successful weekends in the history of this event?*

MB: "That's not quite true. The first year we sold out both nights and to be honest the first night this year wasn't quite full but it was still pretty good for us."

DBR: *So was it all smooth running?*

MB: "We got here and went to check the dirt where we'd stored it from last year and even though we'd stocked it, piled it, tracked it in and covered it up the rain and the frost had still got to it and it was *****g wet."

"It was so bad I wasn't even going to let it go into the arena. I nearly had to cancel the event on Wednesday because I just didn't want to run a second rate event – it was as simple as that. We mixed so many bags of cement into the dirt to try and dry it out."

DBR: *How many people does it take to make this event happen?*

MB: "There are around 75 people who make it happen once it's all together but to really make



it happen there are around 20 or so key people and we also get a good amount of support from the federation here too."

DBR: *What sort of money does it take to try and convince 24 top racers that they really want to come to Belfast?*

MB: "I'll be straight with you – it probably cost around 50 grand."

DBR: *H-h-h-how much? And to fill all those seats must have taken a fair bit of pre-event publicity too?*

MB: "I believe we do it properly and so we spend a lot of money on TV and radio advertising and that usually runs to about 25 grand or so. We have full-time people on PR and advertising around the city which probably costs around 25 too – our total bill for marketing is over 50 grand."

DBR: *So even with a full house the profit margin must be pretty tight?*

MB: "It's real tight. It takes a lot of money to run this event and there are plenty of costs most people would never think about like the hotel bill – I'm just about to pick up a bill for nearly 200 rooms. To make this event pay I can't tell you how hard we have to work."

"I understand everybody has to work hard to make a good living but if I told you that we came here on Tuesday and we didn't break

even until Thursday then you'd think I was a *****g maniac. But that's what we did – we hadn't even broken even before we left home."

DBR: *So tickets weren't selling fast early on?*

MB: "It's always the way with supercross tickets – people always think they'll get a better deal later. They're still in the world of easyJet six years ago."

"If people in this game got off their arses and bought the tickets earlier they'd actually help like you would not believe. There'd be more supercross in Britain if people just bought their tickets three weeks before."

"It's not just the fans either, I get wanky calls off people who should know better who just 30 minutes before your event opens wants 20 tickets. That's what winds me up more than anything, some people in this sport are just a bunch of spongers as far as I'm concerned."

"I pick up the phone to Yamaha, Suzuki, Honda, Kawasaki and if you're lucky enough to get a phone call or an email back you might get some support but the chances are you won't. I get no support off the industry to do anything but they'll just constantly phone me for tickets."

DBR: *So you're saying the manufacturers do nothing to help out the cause?*

MB: "They say that they supply riders but they don't supply riders. We're giving them a showpiece. Would they rather take their riders



to a field in Wales to show 400 people how expensive their team is or would they rather see their riders out there in front of a new audience of 10,000 people?

"They can't even put their hand in their pocket for an advert in the programme or a trackside banner – it just makes me so angry. I'm past the point of asking them for help because I'm not a sponger like they are."

DBR: *UKSX rocked! Is there any chance we'll see you running a full series again?*

MB: "It's small but possible. The only way it would be possible would be if I got the support from the right people outside of our game. I understand that our industry can't facilitate the sponsorship required for supercross. They just probably haven't got the money to do it and if they have they just can't see more than six months ahead."

"Also the ACU have acted unprofessionally and the people they've put in positions to make big decisions scares the hell out of me so why would I want to link up and run a series in conjunction with them – you're dealing with a bunch of amateurs and that's something I'm not."

"It sounds kind of wanky to say it but I'm a businessman and I have a business to run where I pay wages. I can't rely on a decision being made by a guy who wears an orange armband on a Sunday – he makes decisions

to say whether I can pay people at the end of the month."

DBR: *Sounds like your relationship with the ACU isn't so good at the moment...*

MB: "I picked up the phone to the ACU on the Monday before this event and asked them how we – that's me, John Hellam, Gareth Hockey and so on – can work together to make supercross better in this country."

"Their exact words were that they'd 'never work with Hellam again, we realise you did an 'all right' series a few years ago, we know you can do the glitz and the glamour – which I thought was real patronising – but Gareth Hockey has given us a fairly good five-year business plan'. It [his plan] didn't last five days and look where we are..."

"When I read in TMX the Gareth Hockey letter [issue dated November 18] it clearly stated that I never responded to the ACU's invitation to attend a meeting of SX promoters. That's bull****! I phoned Sonia [Goggin – ACU MX committee secretary] the day the invitation landed on my doorstep but no-one had the decency to ring me back."

DBR: *What would you say to people who claim you helped kill British supercross when you sold the UKSX series to Clear Channel?*

MB: "I'd ask them to take a step back and put themselves in my shoes for five minutes. I defy

the man who says that he would have done differently. There were two reasons why I sold it. The first to make money – and I make no bones about that – and the second was that I thought that my baby which I had produced on my own was going to be taken on by the right person and developed into something special."

"The minute I signed on the dotted line I was out of control of it – I was young and naive and didn't realise that. Possibly I also didn't receive sound business advice on how I should have retained control of that and it's something that I regret massively."

"Every week I think about what a big mistake I made because financially I didn't do any good out of it so we all lost from it. But at the same time it was exceptionally difficult to be successful in the first place and I'd by no means made it successful as a business – what seemed good on the outside maybe wasn't so good on the inside."

"If I was to do it again I'd start in the same way – small at first and getting bigger. I'd still run an international race with guys like Tortelli but I'd make heroes out of our local guys – let's face it we have a lot of great riders and that would be the way I'd want to do it."

DBR: *Finally, if you could be any dinosaur which one would you be?*

MB: "A pterodactyl – so I could fly around and ****t on everyone!"



Brad O'Leary (#2) takes his first AMCA title after a tough season-long battle with Rick Du-Feu

NEW BROOM...

...sweeps clean as the old guard move over for two first-time AMCA champions in '05

Words and photos by Mike Wood



WITH 11-TIME AMCA king Gary Davies not competing in 2005 and reigning Open class champ James Russell retiring during the season there were to be new names on the AMCA championship trophies.

Step forward Northampton's exciting Excel Body Repairs Honda 250F pilot Brad O'Leary and Open class rider Simon Lane – a former ACU competitor who even tried qualifying at a Foxhill GP and still boasts a set-up both on and off the track that would be the envy of a lot of pro riders.

In what was another super series that along the way visited venues including Culham, Hawkstone, Matchams and the spectacular Thoresway Honda Moto Parc, the destinations of both titles could well have gone right down to the wire. That was until two championship-deciding moments saw contenders Rick Du-Feu and Aaron Crowder pick up injuries which severely hampered their progress.

Using timed qualification for the first time, the AMCA 2005 championship kicked off in Enmore in Somerset. At a dry and dusty

opener, Ride MX pilot Rob Clark took the 125cc overall win but Matt Porter won at round two at Thoresway before this class developed into an intriguing battle for the crown between O'Leary and Du-Feu. In the Open class championship reigning champ Russell won the only race at Enmore before another Ride MX pilot – Charlie Hollis – ran out winner at Thoresway.

With super-fast 125cc rider Rob Clitheroe already out of action and awaiting an operation on a previously injured scaphoid, another one of the quick boys joined the sick list at

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Thoresway as Lee Payne crashed out of the season, suffering a suspected broken pelvis. And that list became even longer when Open class favourites Hollis and Paul Burn both tumbled at Matchams – Charlie suffering a badly broken leg and ankle while Paul bust his shoulder.

With Charlie out of the championship equation the door was now left wide open for Lane and Crowder to begin their dash for the 2005 crown, pushed all the way by the undisputed AMCA holeshot king David Thomson. But it wasn't just a three-horse race – exciting two-stroke pilots Clinton and Elliot Barrs and Yorkshire sand specialist Danny Blakeley plus Matt Lee, Matt Ryder and Nicholas Batcock were all right on it as well.

In the 125cc class Brad took the overall wins at both Matchams and the following week at Hawkstone chased hard by Du-Feu, Jamie Powell, Lee Dunham, James Lane and David Harrison. Although O'Leary bagged the big points Du-Feu still led the series, helped by one of the most memorable rides of the season in the final Hawkstone moto. On the famous Shropshire circuit Rick battled for almost the whole race with a front wheel puncture on his DK Off-Road 250F Honda, finishing a brilliant second.

Round five at Walterstone, near Pontilras, was to produce the definitive moment in the

Open class battle as Aaron Crowder suffered his first DNF of the season when he twisted his leg in a rut. With the unlucky Lancashire rider out, the dynamic Lane blasted to a brilliant maximum points score to back up his overall win at the previous round at Hawkstone. Leaving Walterstone a delighted Simon had turned a five-point deficit into a 30-point championship advantage with just two rounds remaining.

One round later at Culham came the moment that was to ultimately change the direction of the 125cc title. Battling for the lead in moto two, O'Leary and Du-Feu clashed with Du-Feu biting out hard and dislocating his shoulder. Rick bravely attempted to race in the final moto of the day but his injured shoulder again popped out – leaving Brad to take another vital win. In the title chase after trailing Rick since the opening round in Somerset, Brad now held a very healthy 39-point advantage.

After six dry rounds the rain decided to take big-time revenge at the series' decider at Charnock in Lancashire. Almost in his own backyard, Du-Feu displayed great courage to splash his way to a brace of muddy moto wins but Brad used his head, concentrated hard and steered to a 3-2 scorecard – enough to secure the 125cc title. For the previous two seasons young Brad had finished as championship runner-up so maybe this was justice.

Second in the overall table, Du-Feu could at least take some consolation from his brilliant IMBA 125cc European championship win back in September. Third place in the series was Powell followed by James Lane, Dunham and Harrison. After starting the season strongly, Alan Pearce and Matt Porter both suffered injuries that halted their progress and eventually saw them finish in seventh and ninth places.

In the Open class an absolutely delighted Simon Lane confirmed his first AMCA crown despite suffering a slightly worrying moment in moto one at Charnock. While leading the charge he got stuck in a bike-swallowing rut but despite losing his advantage he quickly recovered his composure to get back to sixth. In the second clash Lane displayed his true class to blast to a magnificent win and the title.

Runner-up position in the championship went to stylish young gun Elliot Barrs ahead of a still injured Aaron Crowder, David Thomson, Danny Blakeley, David Wright, Craig Chamberlain and Paul Burn. After breaking his shoulder at Matchams, Burn made a great late-season recovery, taking the overall win at Culham and third overall at Charnock.

Thomson – after being a main contender for most of the season and a regular top four overall finisher – suffered late season heartache, missing out on the championship bronze medal slot by just four points!



Stylish Elliot Barrs takes second in the Open class title chase



A twisted knee at Walterstone ends Aaron Crowder's challenge





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Old Master!

The last of his three world titles may have come all the way back in '99 but Alessio 'Chicco' Chiodi's still running at the front - and still learning...

Words and Photos by Alex Hodgkinson

Chicco Chiodi's 27th GP win was a long time coming but you can't put a good man down and he's determined it won't be his last!

"I waited five years for that victory in Portugal but I was so close several times, particularly in Namur in 2004. I won the first moto and then had problems with the bike in the second race or that would have been mine."

So what keeps a three times world champion who will be 33 a couple of weeks before the 2006 world series takes off so sharp, proving that age is not a limiting factor. "That win took me one clear of Dave Stribos and one

more will tie me with Gaston Rahier. I need two more GPs to become the winningest 125 rider of all time. I don't pretend it will be easy but it's my aim and it keeps me going!"

Of course, the record could have been attained years ago but for Chicco's fateful decision to head Stateside on the back of a roll of three world titles in 1997, '98 and '99 - first with Yamaha and then two on Huskys.

"It was the correct thing to do. Everything was set up perfectly for me in America but at the last race of '99 in Italy at the Bologna Show the bike broke over a big jump and I broke my

back and my wrist. It was a very bad injury and that finished my dream.

"I am sure I could have made it over there if that had not happened. In the beginning of '99 I had been in the US for training and for fun I rode the first three SX. The feeling was so good. I was also surprised because it had never been my plan until then. I just raced for fun but when I got in the race SX just came so easy.

"That injury changed my entire career. The injury to my back was so bad. It was healed after five months and it was the wrist which was giving me more trouble when I came back to



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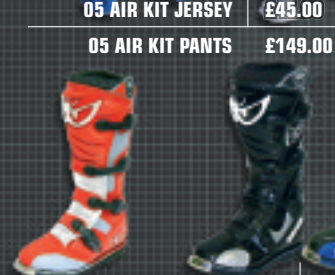
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race again but I am sure that somewhere in the back of my mind it was still there. You try to blank it out, you are not conscious of it but somewhere at the back of your mind you remember what happened subconsciously and you react differently to before.

"I was always a smooth rider, it was never my style to hang off the bike. I never raced over my limits and I still don't!"

With just a few races at the end of Y2K Chicco was lured to the apparently big bucks Berni Yamaha team for 2001. "That was a very difficult year. The bike was not so good, the results were not good, the team did not work well and the mentality in the team was not good. Nothing was as it should be.

"And there was also a big problem with the money. I mean, you get a contract and you

make plans, you take on commitments based on what you are supposed to earn and when it doesn't come...

"You plan your life around what you expect to earn and it plays on your mind when you're not getting the money. Berni just told so much bull to everybody and it just drags you down!"

Chicco's first world crown had come under the watchful eye of Claudio De Carli and for 2002 he signed with the Roman team for the 250 class – one of only two seasons in his 17-year GP career that he didn't ride the 125s.

"It started well. I was fourth in the championship after three races, second at Bellpuig and even ninth in the sand at Valkenswaard after I had to start from the pits when the plug cap broke at the start.

"But then in France I crashed and broke my back again, not the same as '99 – it was more in the neck this time but after that I lost the confidence and the speed. My body was not 100 per cent for the rest of the year. I came back with a fifth in Bulgaria but that was about all – those early results gave me the confidence that I could still do it."

So for 2003 it was back to the smaller class, albeit on a 250 as Yamaha led the four-stroke assault on the class. "I was second again at Bellpuig and was four points off the lead but then I broke my wrist and in 2004 I broke a finger at Zolder and didn't make the start for the opening GP."

By August Chicco had taken the chequered flag first in a GP moto for the first time since achieving the feat 10 times in 1999. But that early season injury kept him down in

fifth in the final standings and last summer – his second with Ricci Yamaha – saw him push for the title through most of the year after that GP win at Bellpuig, his third victory at the track in northern Spain.

"One of my strengths is my consistency. I got that overall but I'm so disappointed that I didn't win a moto last summer. I was so close in Italy. I passed Cairoli easy and had pulled five seconds clear but then I crashed.

"I think if I had won that second moto my motivation and confidence would have been so high that it could have carried me through the rest of the year. Some people underestimate how you can feed on success, no matter how experienced you are. Just look at young Pourcel – when he won the first moto in Czecho his confidence went up and now he is at the front every week. It's like you grow wings and can fly, suddenly anything is possible."

While many other older riders have failed to come to grips with the new track design philosophy, the MX2 veteran has adapted well. "Generally I like the modern track design with the big jumps and whoops. Okay, I prefer the



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traditional tracks like Schwanenstadt and Launsdorf – all green and hillsides – but I have no problem with the artificial SX tracks. My technical riding helps me.

“But I do think sometimes they pass the limit, like in Lierop. The ground there is so challenging that they don’t need to make these things. I remember the first time I raced there – and won – in 1997. By Sunday afternoon the track was so tough naturally – you could hardly see over some of the mounds of sand and that



With team boss Ilario Ricci

don’t know why it has happened because the federation don’t do anything to help the kids. I think success always comes from yourself, the desire to win and I don’t think they have it from racing each other in the minibikes – it has just come of itself.

“And I think they can be even stronger. Cairoli is already champion and everyone can see the possibilities he has but also Philippaerts and Guarneri. It’s like the door has opened slightly, they have got their head in and they have said ‘I am here’. They have each grabbed their chances with both hands. I think I got to watch these guys!”

The closest contact has been to Guarneri – Chicco’s team-mate in the Ricci squad. “Davide asks me advice many times about parts of the track but I don’t have the contact so much to the others. Bonini came training with me many times last year and we often make difficult jumps together and discuss them or discuss different lines through turns. He can be right up there next summer.

“But it depends on your own head. I started like that step by step – always looking to improve. And I am still looking to improve. I still watch the other riders during qualifying – you can often learn more watching from outside than through riding a track for an hour on your own.

“Even now after my three titles I haven’t finished learning. I still learn something every day about jumping or something. The new generation try these things and I have to keep pace. You have to keep up with the times.”

It’s a sad fact that even champions are hard-pushed to make a fortune out of motocross and Chicco enjoys a comfortable but not extravagant lifestyle, still driving himself to all of the races and parking up with the boys.

“It is not easy financially for a GP rider and I was born at the wrong time. I even managed to be champion in the years when there was not good money. You have such a good feeling when you make the podium but you can’t ask the team to pay you more when you make a result because they are on the same budget whether you win or not.

“I actually spend my own money to come to the GP. You have to try to earn money from the team salary and from gear – clothing, helmet, goggles – but perhaps I should have played golf!”

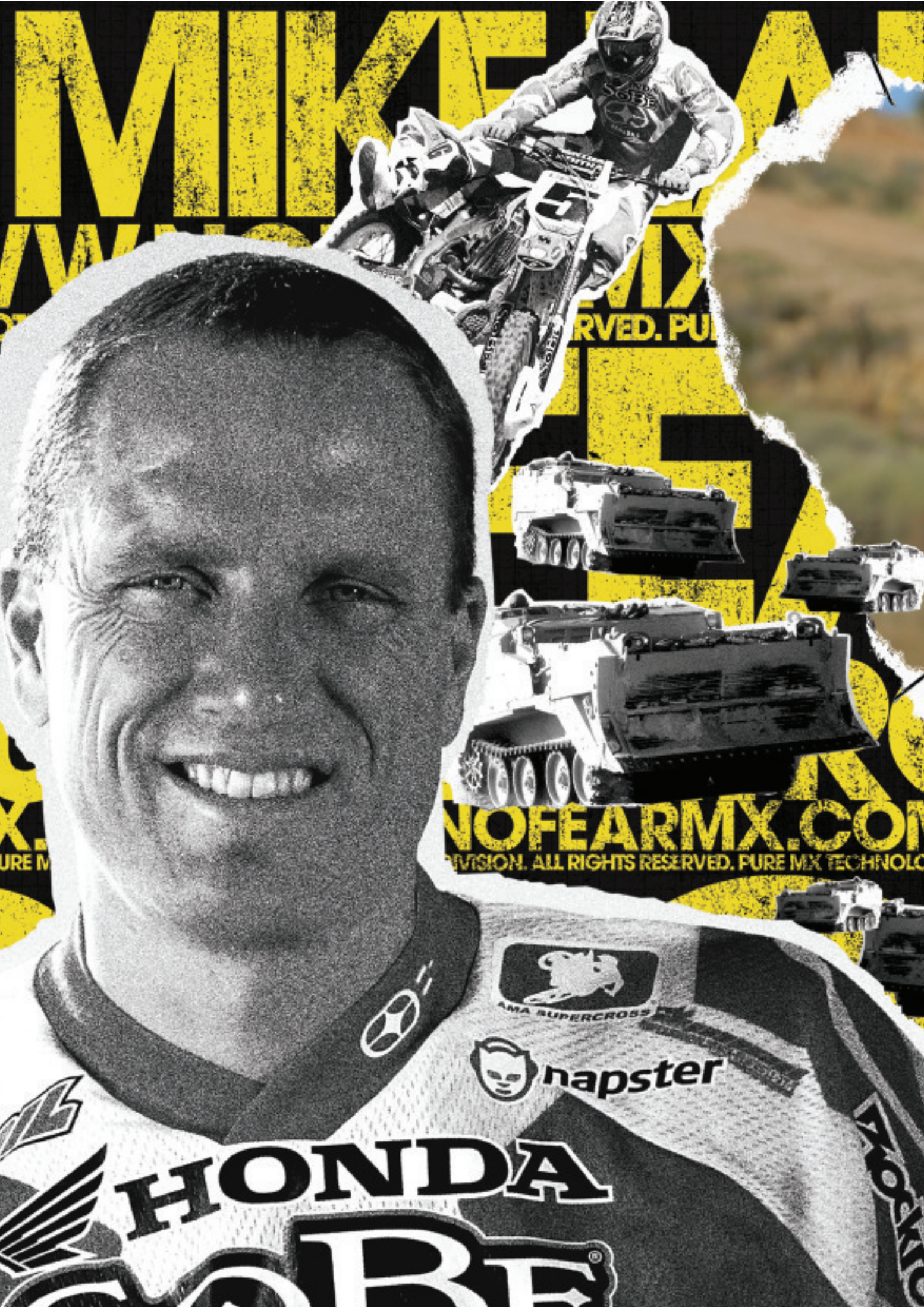
had been flat ground the day before. The sand is so heavy and the bumps come so easily but they make doubles, triples, whoops everywhere. It isn’t necessary.

“You don’t need to make whoops in the sand, they come naturally and they had to spend so much time to fix the ramps. Jumps with ruts are not safe and Lierop was dangerous – not like Matchams and the Isle of Wight. There the jumps were perfect all

weekend. Many tracks have been so good but sometimes they go over the limit. They should find the happy medium.”

For more than a decade the sport in Italy was dominated by four outstanding riders – Chiodi, Bartolini, Federici and Puzar. Chicco is the last of the Golden Age and finds himself being extended on the world stage by a new generation of Italian kids.

“It is a surprise but it is a nice surprise. I



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REALITY CHECK!

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Words by Tony Marshall Photos by Sully





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I THINK it's about time Yamaha gave their 250F a facelift and it's good to see it's finally happened for the '06 model. From a distance I didn't think it had changed too much but when you get up close and see the zero-sixer you start noticing just how many changes they've made – the biggest being the ally frame.

Although Yamaha led the way in the four-stroke market and definitely had a bit of a head start on everyone else I feel they may have been overtaken in recent years – it's such a competitive market and there are some fine bikes out there that don't come in blue.

Track conditions at Mallory were what you'd expect for Britain at this time of year – typical November weather made it tough going and a shortened circuit made it hard to really give the suspension a proper work out.

There was the option to fly out to the States for the test but we decided that seeing as most of you who'll buy the bike will be riding it in the slop, testing it in the slop would make for a more accurate appraisal. There's not much point testing on a sun-baked track when the majority of you will only experience these conditions for, at best, a couple of months in the summer. Suttly mumbled something along the lines of 'keeping it real, little Tony and Chris dudes' and he was right on the money!

Anyway, back to business – so what's the little four-banger actually like. Well, for starters, the riding position feels similar to the 2005 model with a slightly higher seat which could be a bit of a problem for, how can I put it, short-arsed riders. But I think I'm right in saying you can probably put the '05 seat on it or, if not, simply using a thinner seat foam. And, anyway, the extra height seems to help push your weight forward a bit and that's got to be a good thing.

I couldn't believe once I started to pick up the pace how well this bike turns – steering is spot on – even in such wet and slippery conditions. A few times I over-cooked it going into corners and was preparing to end up upside down but the front just went where I pointed it and the back followed suit.

Over braking bumps the front end works in a very balanced manner with the back end. It feels a little bit lighter and narrower than the '05 machine – this may not actually be the case but riding's all about 'feel'.

Through ruts the bike is very positive and inspires confidence which is great for me because I was never a good rut rider and always tried to avoid the things. The bike didn't seem to want to ride out of them – once you were in a rut it was positive all the way through.

Given the reduction to 96db I was impressed with how much power Yamaha have got out of the 250F compared to the '05 machine that was capped at 98db. The very, very bottom could've maybe done with sharpening up a bit which I'm sure could be done with a different pipe but the mid-range is definitely the strongest and most exciting part of the motor.

This was really noticeable through a couple of muddy turns that could've killed it but that strong mid-range just pulled me through. Top-end was good as well although admittedly, given the conditions, the circuit wasn't the best for getting the most from the top-end. I would've loved to have tested on a track where you could have really pushed right through the rev range and seen what the over-rev was like. Saying that, I tried holding a gear a little too long on some parts of the track to see if the power would drop off but it didn't seem to happen.

Jumps were not a problem – even with lots of mud stuck to the bike adding weight the suspension felt very plush and there were no harsh landings. It's a pleasure to ride.

Controls generally feel similar to the '05 model which isn't a bad thing. Yamaha have got this department covered.



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YAMAHA'S LITTLE FOUR-POPPER GETS THE THUMBS UP FROM OUR LITTLE TESTER

Words by Chris Hammal

Being the first manufacturer to introduce the new wave of two-fiddy four-strokes to the tiddler class – and now with a good few years under their belt – you'd expect Yamaha to have got rid of all the kinks and produce a good bike.

Well, they've put loads of effort into the '06 machine and they haven't disappointed. At first glance this bike looks great – everything looks well made, nothing's been over-looked and the plastics have been tweaked a little here and there giving the bike a very modern appearance.

The main change is the new great looking ally frame and like most of the other brands they have done away with the monkey metal standard bar and bolted on nice Renthal Fat Bars. To keep the temp down on this hot four-banger they've made the radiators bigger and they've still got little trick bits like titanium footrests and an easy clutch adjuster as standard. After throwing a leg over the steed it felt good – the seat height was high and the bars were a little low but, unlike its two-stroke cousins, the handlebars didn't feel down by my knees and there's a nice narrow feel to the bike making it come across as less bulky.

Then came the time to fire up the beast – unlike four-bangers of old this bike was a pish of pish to start as Sean Connery might say. Hot or cold it fired up first kick, then when life was in the motor the bike sounded great with a real bark to it – even with one big ass silencer hanging out the back which I think they've taken from a four fifty (obviously, the length keeps it within the new noise restrictions).

Once out on the wet and muddy Mallory Park the bike felt good. It is an easy and comfy bike to ride that fills you with confidence the more laps you notch up. I don't know what bend the Renthals are but they are great and for a four-stroke it feels light and manoeuvrable – in the corners it went where you aimed it. Even in the muddy, slippery conditions the flat seat and tank profile made it easy to move around on the bike.

As for the engine, off the bottom it had a snap to the motor with instant power and from there up through the rev range it pulled well and kept on ripping – the motor felt easily rideable and has useable power for any ability. The gearbox worked without fault and was smooth.

On to the suspension. This felt a little on the rigid side but some of that could be down to newness and that they still needed a little working in. But the action was smooth and it didn't bite back so with a little tweaking you could get it dialed in. It also soaked up a lot of hits, I noticed this watching Tony messing about on some little whoops – the bike absorbed all he could throw at it with ease.

This bike shows why Yamaha won both the MX1 and MX2 world titles. They know how to build a great bike and this is a great all-round bike for any ability of rider. It even made me want to stay out playing on it all day and we're talking a cold winter day up north (everywhere above the Thames is north to me).



specifications

YZ250F

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Capacity: | 249cc |
| Bore and stroke: | 77mm x 53.6mm |
| Transmission: | Five-speed |
| Carburettor: | Keihin FCR37mm |
| Front suspension: | Kayaba fork (300mm travel) |
| Rear suspension: | Kayaba shock (310mm travel) |
| Front brake: | 250mm disc |
| Rear brake: | 245mm disc |
| Wheelbase: | 1473mm |
| Seat height: | 994mm |
| Dry weight: | 93.5kg |



*Nev in action for
South Africa at the '05
Motocross des Nations*



CULTURE SHOCK!

After cutting his teeth on the hardpack tracks of his native South Africa, Neville Bradshaw faced a few surprises when he upped sticks to Europe - good job the Motovision Suzuki star's a fast learner...

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson, Toby Fuller and Sutt Dawg





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SOUTH AFRICANS have tended to hit Europe in groups over the years. Back in the mid-to-late '80s Rob Herring, Paul Cooper, Ryan Hunt and Collin Dugmore crossed the Equator to find glory and more recently we've been treated to Grant Langston, Tyla Ratray, Gareth Swanepoel and Wyatt Avis.

"I was the last fast guy of my generation there after Tyla, Gareth and Wyatt came over," says Neville Bradshaw – and Motovision's big guy is looking to make up for lost time in 2006!

"My dad's Irish and emigrated to SA to work for Suzuki as parts manager. He's the one who got me into racing when I was five," explains the 22-year-old from Jo'burg who's been a permanent feature of the UK scene for two seasons now after a false start first time around.

"The first time I raced outside SA was in the German SX five years ago. That was pretty hard coming straight from SA to a big SX race. Everything was so different – it was a real shock to the system.

"The sport is just so laidback in SA. Like, everybody just turns up and parks the van for the day and at the end of the day go home. There's no big trucks at all.

"Back home I'd been riding Honda but Glen Dempsey said the Pfeil Kawasaki team were looking for riders for the German series and asked me if I wanted to come over. I was riding Kawasaki the next year anyway so I jumped at the chance.

"Back home there was just Ryan Hunt and me. I was coming from racing and winning everything and suddenly you're not even top five in a qualifier. It's a shock. Like, everyone was fast, there were no slow riders and it took a while to get used to it. The first race in Stuttgart I didn't qualify but I went back and rode more and qualified the second race then I put my shoulder out so I had to go back home."

And that could have been the last we saw of Nev. "Like I said there was just Ryan Hunt and me back home. He had come back and we were always racing together but he was so hard to beat – we only race 15-minute motos back home and the tracks are all hardpack. When I finally started beating him it was time to move out. I needed to go somewhere else, somewhere with more competition.

"I came over and raced the Isle of Wight British championship round in 2003 – I did pretty good in the second moto and got 11th. Scott Gardner had been involved in getting me a bike for that race so when I said I wanted to come for a season he fixed me a deal with Planet MX.

"I was talking to a couple of people but I decided to go with Scott and I raced for him for the first half of last year. I like Scott and I liked the team but they simply ran out of money halfway through the season and that is when I joined Motovision.

"Mark [Chamberlain] and Scott are good friends so Mark knew the situation when Planet started to run out of money. My bike was breaking a lot and I was ready to go back home again but Antoine Letellier was leaving Motovision and Mark gave me a call and said he'd give me a chance."

An already promising career took off! "I took a big step forward. By the end of the year I raced the GP in Ireland and scored points and the weekend before I'd been third at the Isle of Wight so my confidence was high. It was unreal. Like, when I first came over here I was riding 15th-16th in the British and by the end of the year I was on the podium.

"I knew I could do it, I just needed to feel comfortable. I was riding all the time and had input from everyone around me as well as picking up tips by going behind other riders and watching them."

Leading team-mate
Yoshi Atsuta at Whitby



That may sound a little like plagiarism but you have to understand where Neville is coming from. "The tracks in SA are all hardpack so the English tracks with all the ruts and bumps were a big shock at first. And the long races – but I was strong enough to take the extra distance."

Despite his still limited experience over here Motovision decided to switch Nev to MX1 for 2005. "It was the right decision for me to switch to the big bikes this year. I'm a big guy and the big bike suits my style a lot more – I'm too aggressive on a small bike and I lose a lot of speed. And in the MX1 you can pretty much do it on a stock 450 but you need a real trick bike in MX2.

"I started off good at Canada Heights with two fifths and I was just getting better and better until I broke my foot. It's still not right but at least I can ride unhampered now and things started to come together again towards the end of the season."

Few possibly realise just how hard it was mid-summer for Nev. "I rode with a broken foot at the Desertmartin British championship round. That was just three weeks after the operation but I was still scoring top 10 so it kinda kept the championship alive. I still wasn't fit when I rode the round after that either but I went to Matchams for the last round still looking at top five in the series – unfortunately I had a DNF and just missed it but it was worth trying to ride to get as close as I did."

The GP season had started badly with a DNF at Zolder. "It was weird. In the free practice I was quick enough but when it came to doing a lap I choked. I got close but close is not enough. Then I qualified in Portugal but around that time I got an iron deficiency too so I never really showed what I am capable of in the GPs."

By Ireland Nev was flowing again and showing enough promise to ride in front of the biggest crowd of his career at the des Nations where he put in two scoring rides to match team-mates Swanny and Ratray all the way. His efforts did not go unnoticed and last month it was another big day as he got plunged in at the deep end at the Bercy SX after another strong showing at Sheffield.

And Neville didn't choke, qualifying for the Main two nights out of three – one of the few UK-based riders ever to make the cut in the French capital.

Already in late summer it was looking



At the '05 pre-season
international meeting
at Pernes

doubtful that Motovision would be targeting the full world series in 2006. But the sabbatical from the Big Time is just what both team and rider need. "2006 is a season for me to rebuild in the UK. The aim is to be running with the GP riders every round in the British championship. That means that I need a hard schedule to keep me up to speed. I'll go home after I've done the British SX [you can go now then, eh? – Sully] but I already have my reservation to fly back to Britain on February 15. I'll be doing the full British championship and the four-strokes and hopefully a couple of GPs too.

"I can't think of a better atmosphere for me to come back strong. The team is so relaxed and Mark puts everything he can into the team – he's been around the racing for a real long time so he can really help me out.

"Up until now I've been staying with Mark but I'm moving into a place in London during the winter. 2005 has been a set-back year with the injury but I've still come through it with my best ranking yet. I want to be a GP challenger in '07 and the sky's the limit in the end."



Nev prepares his gate at the Dublin SX



The young South African will be taking a sabbatical from GPs in '06



With team boss Mark Chamberlain at Bercy

Ton-up kid

100 SMILES AN HOUR!

Words by Suttly

If constantly carrying an infectious grin across your chops won world championships, Nev would undoubtedly top the all-time win lists way ahead of that miserable Belgian-built winning-machine that's just notched up its ninth world title.

Although it's never been scientifically proven I theorise that it's more or less impossible to turn Nevster's upside-down frown upside-down. Even if you dropped some devastating news into a random conversation – for instance 'Nev, the Motovision truck's just run right over your pet kitten in the pits – it's not pretty' he'd still be grinning like a goon. Bloody brilliant!

But brooding behind that ever present smile is a young athlete who is way too self-critical and someone who craves success so much it almost hurts. That's quite a shocking revelation when you consider that Neville seems so laidback.

"I can smile but deep down I just get frustrated with myself," says Nev. "I put in so much hard work and I come off the track thinking I should have done this or I should have done that."

"He beats himself up too much," reckons Nev's hirsute team boss Mark Chamberlain. "In general he's far too hard on himself when he needs to be a little bit more objective about his faults. That's a good thing in some ways but we need to ween it down so it's a little bit diluted – he needs to be easier on himself."

"It's because I'm desperate I reckon," adds Nev before betraying his comment by punctuating it with his trademark grin. "I think that's a bad thing in a way because sometimes when you want something so much it just doesn't come – 2006 is a year when I'm

not gonna try so much and I'm just gonna let it all come to me."

And the 2006 season looks set to be a little different for the Motovision squad as they step back from being full-time players on the GP scene which Neville believes is a positive thing in his long-term development as a racer. "I want to have one more year in the British where I can work with Mark because I believe that he can help me on a personal level because he's been around for so long."

"I think with him taking a step back from the GPs and promoting the GP and stuff he'll have a lot more time and be under less pressure so he'll be able to work a lot more with us riders. I want to become more complete as a rider and then the year after try and get back into the GPs and stuff."

"I'm really looking forward to the new season. My new team-mate next year is Jake Nicholls – he's a young kid and is very enthusiastic about the racing and he has a good style. I'm maybe gonna go up to his track and go riding with him and I think we'll be able to push each other along."

While things look on-track for '06, Nev's had it pretty tough so far in Britain as changing teams mid-season from Planet MX to Motovision in '04 and a nagging foot injury in '05 have taken their toll on Neville's confidence – but one of the biggest things Bradshaw has to battle with on a day-to-day basis is being away from home.

"I get down sometimes when I'm on my own. It's like you don't have your mum with you and you have to do your own washing and make your own food. My mum is the strongest person I know – she's amazing – and if I'm actually gonna have a long career here I'm thinking about getting her over here because she's been my strength for the last few years in motocross – it's all her."

But it was actually Neville's dad who got the ball rolling in Britain. "I first came over in '03 and did a one-off race at the Isle of Wight. My dad lives in Ireland so I asked him to try and get me a deal and he managed to sort something with Kawasaki. I did pretty well and that's when I knew I had to come and try and make it happen over here."

"I speak to my dad every day. We're always arguing about deals you know – he doesn't grasp that it's what's best for me that counts. It's cool getting loads of money from a team but then you've got to go out and get good results. With Motovision it might not be so much money but they're working with you to make you a better rider."

As well as having a lot of faith in Mark at Motovision, Neville's also got a great relationship with his mechanic Matt Hutchins. "He's like a brother to me and he helps with my life as well as my bikes. I see him every day at the workshop. I think he's like me – or like me when I was younger. He's a little cocky and gets ****ed off all the time so he understands what I'm going through and he can make me laugh."

With the support of a great team and a new found outlook on life, 2006 could be the year that Neville breaks into the big-time and he's confident he's ready to knock it up a notch. "I think I can run top three in the British championship and top seven in the world within the next few years and then if I can sort everything out I need to with my riding and my life and stuff I think running top eight in America is also a possibility."

And Neville's American adventure could be starting sooner than anticipated. "I think we're gonna go do some races there next year and maybe if I do well I'll get offered a deal. That could be the way to go but I don't mind working my arse off in Europe either – so long as I'm on a bike I'm happy."

Bradshaw goes bar to bar with Jussi Vehvilainen – his team-mate in '06 – at Canada Heights

the boss speaks...

CHAMBO ON NEV

"Nev is such a determined rider – a bit stubborn perhaps but that's to his advantage being gritty. His determination and his work ethic are really good and I see progression all the time. I'm not trying to say it's down to us but from when he joined us to now you can see that he is learning.

"He looks up to other riders but not out of awe – he looks to them to learn because you have to respect the guys who are winning or you're not going to figure out what they're doing. He's a good, straightforward guy. He's not overcomplicated in his racing, not a prima donna.

"I'm looking to see Nev start running with guys like Noble in the British week-in, week-out next year which I think he can.

"We need to get enough good races so that he is still progressing without running the GPs and then we can try to capitalise when they've been on their long trips. We need to benefit when they're tired from going to Japan and SA. The plan is to be really competitive at home but I also want to build a better platform to come back even stronger in the GPs in 2007.

"I hope we can get Nev a ride in a few GPs at the end of the summer but we will do the British, the four-strokes and whenever possible a couple of MX3s. We are building Nev a bike and we will go there with the full team. Jake Nicholls has come on board and I want him to gain experience in some European 125 rounds – these races are not GPs but the level is really high.

"We've got some good sponsors coming on board and if we can have a good season we can take it on into 2007. The team went through difficult times this year when One Industries pulled out mid-season. People will say that it was business when we split but to me there must be a certain ethics in business and I don't think they followed them. We had an agreement and we have carried the logos all summer until the end because I feel that that was the professional way to deal with it.

"They just tried to put pressure on us to buy more than we wanted to. It was the numbers. They wanted to tell us how many of their helmets we had to buy but we are the ones living in the UK. We should and we do know the UK market better than they do. And Motovision is still in there and with Nev we will be back to where we were in 2004 with Tanel."



© Sully



Top three in the British champs is a realistic aim for Nev in '06

The 300cc two-stroke pulls like a train – in this case pulling a cargo of prime Irish eejit

BELLO! BELLO! BELLO!

They're Italian, they're beautiful and they pack a powerful punch! Walker puts a trio of tasty TM enduro machines to the test and lives to tell the tale...

Words by Geoff Walker Photos by Ray Chuss

MOST THINGS Italian are designed with speed and style in mind – Ferraris, Ducatis, Valentino Rossi, the Fiat Panda... Sometimes they miss the target but generally they get pretty close.

The '06 TM two-stroke enduro range is definitely very close to reaching that particular target. These bikes look absolutely superb to

me. TM have got the look just right for '06 – clean lines and some very high quality parts all help to make for a package which is pleasing to the eye.

The UK bikes are all coming with the black Paioli/Kayaba forks and this also helps with the look of the bikes in my opinion as the gold Ohlins (available as a special order) are a little bit too disco for my liking. The colour scheme works well and I think the simplicity of the design makes the bikes contenders for best looking machines of zero-six.

If the ride was going to compare to the look of the bikes I was in for a real treat around the all-new trail loop at Rushmead Race Park.

The 125 TM is a bike which has, in the past,

had a reputation for being fast but a little bit unreliable. That was until the '05 season when the 125 motocross model tore up the tracks of the UK, taking wins and having a good go at the four-stroke two-fiddys. This reliability of the motocross model is due to a higher build quality and the evolution of the company as a whole. Of course, this helps with the enduro model as it's now a bike that's built on a reliable reputation.

When you first sit on the 125 TM you get a feeling of sitting on the bike and not in it. Some riders like this kind of seating position as it is quite aggressive. I don't mind this position and if I was six inches shorter it would be just about perfect.



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The rubber-mounted bar clamps hold a set of oversized TM bars with a good comfortable sweep and the billet triple clamps are a touch of class. The controls are all light and comfortable.

The Nissin front brake master cylinder (as used by Honda) gives an added confidence before you ride and the hydraulic clutch feels smooth and effortless, just like the throttle action. Sometimes it's easy to forget the plus points of riding a little two-stroke and one of these is the easy and light feel to the throttle – it's simply great.

So with everything set-up to my liking and the motor warmed up it was off to work. The initial feel of the motor is pretty scary. This piece of Italian engineering loves to be revved. It reacts to being abused and this is quite a strange sensation in an enduro bike. The bike has got two sides to its motor. The low down power is adequate – nothing amazing but this is a 125 and that follows the rules. But then with a smooth transfer from the middle of the power curve it turns into a GP motocross bike!

The little TM is a bit Jekyll and Hyde and that is a fine quality. The engineers have built the bike to be light and fun and this is exactly what it is. The 125 TM is great fun to ride hard and it's light enough to tickle around in all the tight, technical going even without a massive amount of low down grunt.

The chassis will help you get up and over

most obstacles on the trails. The Paioli/Kayaba forks work really well and give a good feeling through the bars. The action is smooth and only bottomed slightly when I turned a few laps on the motocross circuit at the end of the day.

The only initial problem with the chassis was a harsh feeling from the rear of the bike. Through the day the shock came better as the TM crew softened the setting quite a lot to allow the bike to work on all the different types of terrain. These small changes allowed the bike to enter and exit pretty much every type of turn at the test venue with ease.

To round up on the 125 I would have to say that the bike offers great fun and great speed. This bike will make you smile and have you hangin' it out like a legend.

All the fun of the tiddler with a lot of power – that's what the TM designers have gone for with the 250. The seating position seems a little more comfortable for me as a taller rider as I sat down into the bike a little more. This instantly gave me a confidence boost as the faster parts of the lap were able to be attacked harder.

With the same softer setting on the shock as we put on the 125 the overall balance of the chassis was good at high speed.

The motor on the 250 was, as I expected it to be, really strong. This bike is developed by some of the fastest racers in the WEC and

Italian championships so it gives that 'pro' feeling without being too much for the average weekend rider's abilities.

TM make bikes to be ridden and raced. Their policy is such that you can buy the exact bike which is being ridden at the highest level and go have fun on it. This is definitely the case with this 250 and the motor enjoyed being ridden at all parts of the throttle opening.

The only small dip in the power was around a quarter throttle but a needle change would smooth this out. We had to leave the bike just a little rich on that part of the carb as it was a really heavy day which made for a great test.

I buried the bike to its nuts in **** and water and it never missed a beat. The only thing missing a beat was Woody of TM UK's heart as he wasn't enjoying the abuse being handed out to his pride and joys!

The 250 goes beyond expectations for me as I was expecting a harsh and aggressive ride. The bike reacted well in all situations and really enjoyed the motocross track as well as the trail.

Things were really cooking by this point in the test and the 300 looked like a bike demanding a bit of respect – 300 cubes could get me into all kinds of shapes, none of them good!

The 300 feels exactly the same as the 250 when you first jump on. Again, all the

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controls are positive so with the bars set and the motor warm it was time to have some fun.

As soon as you pull away on the 300 the smile will begin to appear on your face. This is almost a guarantee as the feeling of roll-on, controllable power takes you on a trip. Maybe I can only speak for myself here but the way the power is delivered is really confidence-inspiring. TM have a reputation for making some serious fire-breathing two-stroke motors but with this motor they have really hit the jackpot.

The thing pulls like a train from absolute zero and just keeps on rollin'. You can put this bike

into any situation and it will do a good part of the work. On the fast stuff the motor and chassis work really well – with a balanced feel – and in the technical going the bike is still light enough to allow you to attack any climbs, steps or obstacles that may be in your way. This puppy took me straight up an eight foot near vertical step and I was just along for the ride.

Shifting is typically European as with all of the range. You have to make sure of the shift until the gearbox is well run in but as the day went on the shifting became effortless.

With the little extra weight on the 300 the suspension worked well and felt pretty

balanced although we did have to soften the rear shock again.

Turning, climbing, technical going, fast going, ease of ride, build quality – the TM 300 really is a great all-round bike for all levels of rider.

So there it is. The TM '06 E range is heading for the big time and good luck to them. The factory have stuck to their policy of giving the buyer a bike to go and race at any level without the need to buy any other go-faster parts.

A big thanks to TM UK and especially Woody for the entertainment on the day – short legs and grassy hills are no good for man nor beast!



EN125

Capacity: 123.5cc
Bore and stroke: 54mm x 54.5mm
Transmission: Six-speed
Carburettor: Keihin PWK38
Front suspension: Kayaba/Paioli USD 48mm
Rear suspension: Ohlins shock
Front brake: 270mm disc
Rear brake: 245mm disc

EN300

Capacity: 294cc
Bore and stroke: 72mm x 72mm
Transmission: Five-speed
Carburettor: Keihin PWK38
Front suspension: Kayaba/Paioli USD 48mm
Rear suspension: Ohlins shock
Front brake: 270mm disc
Rear brake: 245mm disc

EN250

Capacity: 249cc
Bore and stroke: 66.4mm x 72mm
Transmission: Five-speed
Carburettor: Keihin PWK38
Front suspension: Kayaba/Paioli USD 48mm
Rear suspension: Ohlins shock
Front brake: 270mm disc
Rear brake: 245mm disc

steve cox



Steve Cox is an American moto-journo who follows the entire AMA SX/MX tour. A staffer at famed US weekly Cycle News for over four years before striking out on his own to do the freelance thing, Steve's an ex-pro motocross racer so he can ride as well as write. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides top-level insight and features fresh from the Stateside scene...

**RC REINFORCED HIS
DOMINANCE AT THE
'05 MXdN**



NOTHING TO PROVE!

RICKY CARMICHAEL IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE GREATEST MOTOCROSS RACER IN THE WORLD TODAY. HE HAS SET RECORDS THAT MAY NEVER BE BROKEN AND HE ONLY TURNED 26 AT THE END OF NOVEMBER. PHENOMENONS LIKE RICKY CARMICHAEL ARE RARE TO SAY THE LEAST. COMING INTO 2005 MANY THOUGHT HE WOULD MEET HIS MATCH, FINALLY, WITH JAMES STEWART. THAT FAILED TO MATERIALISE AND CARMICHAEL WON EVERYTHING IN SIGHT – AND HE DID IT ON SUZUKIS WHICH MANY IN THE AMA SERIES CONSIDERED INFERIOR EQUIPMENT.

IN '05 HE SWEEPED EVERYTHING. HE WON THE WORLD SX CHAMPIONSHIP (WINNING NINE OF 17 RACES), THE AMA SX CHAMPIONSHIP (WINNING SEVEN OF 16 RACES), THE AMA 250cc NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP (WINNING ALL 12 ROUNDS OVERALL AND ONLY LOSING TWO OF 24 MOTOS), BOTH HIS MOTOS AT THE MOTOCROSS DES NATIONS IN FRANCE (LEADING TEAM USA TO THE WIN) AND BOTH NIGHTS OF RACING AT THE US OPEN (HIS FIRST EVER SUPERCROSS ON A FOUR-STROKE). ONE WORD PERFECTLY SUMS UP A SEASON LIKE THAT – DOMINANCE!

RC keeps saying he has nothing left to prove – but he always seems to come up with some reason to win...

Words and photos by STEVE COX

DBR: You've just completed probably your most dominant season and it came late in your career. After a year like that what are your expectations for 2006?

RC: "I think as I get older and there's more competition things develop. I think my expectations are to just defend my title. I'm not really focused on race wins. I want to be there and I want to be the last man standing in Vegas. That's my goal. Every year my goal is to defend my title so I'm not too focused on race wins."

DBR: It had become sort of a cliché during the season ♦



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RICKY CARMICHAEL **interview**

because you kept saying that you had nothing left to prove. Have you come up with anything to prove since then?

RC: "You know, I think it's going to be fun for me [in 2006] for sure because, like I said, I really wanted that supercross title and I got it so I think with a little less pressure when I'm not in a must-win situation, I'm really looking forward to enjoying the season. I think it's going to be good for me. I want to try to get some more titles, man."

DBR: You've always kind of had internal pressure to win...

RC: "Yeah, as you know, I always put a lot of pressure on myself just because I've always felt like I needed to get it done. Now I just want to do it for myself. That's all the pressure I need right there."

DBR: Is there a possibility of not having pressure all of a sudden resulting in getting beat?

RC: "No, I don't think that's going to be a problem. If it's going to be hard work then it's going to be fun for me because it'll keep me motivated and keep me going. I think if I feel like I've got nothing I need to do it might be worse for me. It might distract me from my ways of trying to win and wanting to be up front."

DBR: It looks like right now that Chad Reed, James Stewart, Kevin Windham and your new team-mate (and supercross specialist) Ivan Tedesco are all going to be on four-strokes at least to start the season. With this all changing, has it changed the way you're approaching the season?

RC: "It definitely makes you think but I think we're going to use Canada as a measuring stick to see which direction we go. The great thing is we have two good bikes. I think the four-stroke is really good and I think our two-stroke is improved. I'm really looking forward to Canada and seeing the results from that to use it as a test. You can't really go off of the US Open."

DBR: Right, because most of the top guys didn't race...

RC: "Yeah and besides that it's not a real stadium-style track. You can't really give the four-stroke a fair shot there. But I've been riding both and testing both and we'll just see how it plays out in Canada."

DBR: Is the plan to take both with you like you had at the US Open?

RC: "No, I think we're just going to take the 450 to Canada and see how it goes. But, like I said, we have been doing testing on both bikes just because I ain't sure that the 450's the route to go yet. I still think it has some hiccups on the track that we need to get rid of and, since we have 18 races, it's important not to look at what's going to be good at one or two events."

DBR: I heard a rumour that they may be cutting down a lot of the berms this year like they started to do last year after Matt Goerke jumped into the stands in practice. Have you heard that? And, if so, does that play at all into your decision making?

RC: "I don't think so. I think the outside berms are going

to be taken down but, to be honest with you, I'm glad you touched on this subject because I want this sport to grow and I really feel like we need to change the tracks a little bit to benefit the fans.

"I don't think that the field is deep enough in supercross. We race a lot and we're the only sport that is making the machines faster and the tracks more dangerous and I think we need to tailor it to the fans' liking to generate a deeper field and better racing for the fans. It's going to get old for these guys. You can only have one or two guys winning for so many years in order to make it grow and get up to the next step – get more TV and this and that. We need to generate better racing. We need to make the tracks easier.

"I know that some of the top riders don't want to do that but I want to see the sport do what NASCAR has. And the reason NASCAR is so good – and other sports are so good – is because they make it close. It's close competition. You don't know who's going to win. I personally wouldn't want to go to a race or a football game or any contest where I know who's going to win. That's not fun.

"If your guy's Ernesto Fonseca and you want him to win he doesn't have a good chance if the track is super-gnarly. We've got to make the tracks easier, man, to generate better racing and make the field deeper. Even if we make the track easier the best guy is still going to win – it's just going to be a little harder for him."

DBR: That's actually a good point. If you look at NASCAR it's essentially an easy oval track most of the time. You look at the NFL and they've put in salary caps for the teams to level the field and, since then, the sport has grown tremendously.

RC: "I'm no promoter but I do have my beliefs. And if anybody can tell me that it's better the way it is now



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than it would be making the field deeper and bringing more people, I'd like to talk to them. I just feel the tracks are too gnarly for most of the guys out there and they need to get the field deeper. It's bad for me to make the tracks easier and it's bad for Chad and Bubba and Kevin – the guys who are up front all of the time. But it just gets stale. I really think to get to the next level we've got to make the tracks safer and easier and that's going to generate better racing and that's going to bring more fans."

DBR: And you'd assume it would keep the riders healthier longer which would help with keeping the competition up too...
RC: "Absolutely. K-Dub got hurt a couple years ago, Bubba got hurt this year, I got hurt last year and Chad has been pretty good but he got hurt this year outdoors. We've got to have everybody healthy and we've got to have the Michael Byrnes and the Fonsecas and all of those guys in the mix. The only way to do that is to make the tracks a little bit easier."

DBR: This kind of leads me into a question I wanted to ask. Have you put any thought into hanging around to represent the riders or the sport in general after you're done racing?
RC: "Absolutely! I would love to do that. I'm never going to leave the sport. This sport is what made me who I am. I may have some other opportunities to do other kinds of racing but this is what I love to do and, hell, I might race for a long time."

"And, back to the other question, if the tracks were easier you'd probably get a lot more longevity out of the racers."

"Anyway, I'd love to start out by just helping young riders at Suzuki, getting them on the right path and just voicing my opinions at the right place at the right time to help the sport grow. I think we deserve what NASCAR is getting now."

DBR: If you had a crystal ball how would you see 2006 playing out?

RC: "Obviously, there's going to be three or four at the max who

have a great chance to win any race. I think I do, then Chad, Bubba and Kevin. All four of us are the kind of guys who can win. Ivan can do pretty good at times and he'll have a good shot at some podiums but with the way things are and the tracks the way they are I just want to stay healthy!"

DBR: Yeah, it seems like it's possible to win the championships just by outlasting everybody.
RC: "You could get seconds all season and be the champ."

DBR: It always seems like – even if you start with four or five good guys – it comes down to a maximum of two racers.

RC: "Seriously, Steve, by Daytona it's down to one guy versus the other guy which sucks because then you've got eight races left [laughs] and you're like, 'damn, all right, it's between these two guys so who gives a **** who's behind them'. That's the deal."

DBR: Okay, so you race supercross then you defend your outdoor title. Then what?

RC: "I've got a three-year contract with Suzuki but the third year is optional for me. They're committed and the only thing I need to do is commit. Right now, I plan on racing another two years and then kind of taking a step back and maybe doing some selected events. I'd like to still race supercrosses as long as I can – provided they're fun – and do some 125 racing and stuff. Besides that, though, I have a great opportunity to do some NASCAR racing and that really inspires me. It's a new challenge. At the same time my roots are always going to be in moto."

DBR: It seems like if you could go to NASCAR and be successful that could actually help motocross as well.
RC: "Absolutely. I think there's a lot of great things that could come of it. That's definitely a goal. Right now that's wishful thinking but I would love to someday be able to race a car and do fairly good and bring some fans from car racing to moto and get the respect that motocross and supercross deserve."

DBR: The last question I have is regarding what's going on down at your house. You've got Ben Townley down there now and all of that. How's that going?
RC: "It's going really good. It's fun for me. I'm glad to see Aldon [Baker – RC and now BT's trainer] has another guy to work with. It's the two of us and we keep each other motivated and it's fun. I can help him in ways and I really like to help new guys coming up – guys that are willing to listen and willing to commit. There's a lot of guys that want to commit but deep down they really don't. It seems like Ben really does. He rode great at the MXdN and it's fun to have a guy here that's committed and who's going to be here for a while. I'm really having a blast with it. It's fun and we have a great time together."

TALE OF THE TAPE

RC's star stats

1996 AMA Rookie of the Year
1997 125cc National Champion
1998 125cc Eastern Regional Supercross Champion
1998 125cc National Champion
1999 125cc National Champion
2000 250cc National Champion
2000 Motocross des Nations Champion
2001 250cc Supercross Champion
2001 250cc National Champion
2002 250cc Supercross Champion
2002 250cc National Champion
2003 250cc Supercross Champion
2003 250cc National Champion
2004 250cc National Champion
2005 250cc Supercross Champion
2005 World Supercross Champion
2005 250cc National Champion
2005 Motocross des Nations Champion
Record: Most SX wins in a row (13 – tied with Jeremy McGrath)
Record: Most SX wins in a season (14 – tied with Jeremy McGrath)
Record: Only undefeated SX season ever (1998 125cc East)
Record: Only undefeated National season ever (250cc – 2002 and 2004 never lost a moto and 2005 never lost an overall)
Record: Most AMA National wins by one rider (127 and counting)
Record: Most AMA National titles by one rider (13 and counting)
Record: Most AMA 250cc National MX wins by one rider (61 and counting)
Record: Most AMA 250cc National MX victories in a row (27 and counting)
Record: Most US Open wins by any rider (three and counting)

Also, he has never lost an AMA outdoor national title. He has never lost a points lead once he's had it. He has never unsuccessfully defended a title (the only one he lost after he won he didn't compete in and that was the 2004 AMA SX series).



HIT OR MISS?

The 2006 AMA SX season could be the greatest in the history of the sport – but then again...

Words and photos by STEVE COX

THE 2005 AMA SX SERIES HAD THE POTENTIAL TO BE THE GREATEST SUPERCROSS SEASON SINCE THE '92 DAMON BRADSHAW/JEFF STANTON/JEAN-MICHEL BAYLE SHOWDOWN. WE HAD DEFENDING CHAMP CHAD REED, FIVE-RACE WINNER IN '04 KEVIN WINDHAM, THE RETURN OF RICKY CARMICHAEL TO SUPERCROSS AND THE MOST HYPED 250CC ROOKIE SINCE BRADSHAW IN JAMES STEWART.

BUT THE THING ABOUT POTENTIAL IS THAT IT'S NOT REAL. IT SEEMS LIKE EVERY YEAR IT COMES DOWN TO TWO GUYS AT MOST – REGARDLESS OF HOW MANY START OUT WITH A CHANCE OF WINNING THE AMA SX TITLE.

"Like Anaheim was last year, everybody's going to be a ball of fire and I'm going to get my ass kicked and so and so's going to win," Carmichael says. "But I'm just going to go and do what I know is going to help me win and try to stay out of harm's way. It seems like no matter how many guys there are coming into a series, it only comes down to two guys. The race really starts in Daytona."

Daytona is round 10 of the 16-round AMP'D Mobile AMA Supercross Championship. As such it signifies the beginning of the 'home stretch' for the series. By Daytona quite frequently some of the contenders have either had a bad race or two or they've been injured badly enough to miss some races.

Perhaps this is why Carmichael has been so successful. He's not just fast and fit, he also has a complete game-plan for an entire motocross or supercross season. And it seems

they are usually good plans as 2005 produced his fourth AMA SX title and his sixth AMA National MX title.

The 2006 season brings the 2005 contenders back together without much change, with the possible exception of how many strokes their bikes may have. RC won the US Open on an RM-Z450 four-stroke since he didn't have enough testing time in the two weeks between the Motocross des Nations and the US Open to get his RM250 set up and get used to it again.

At the same time, Chad Reed is testing the new aluminium-framed YZ450F for supercross. "I have only tested four days on the 450F and I am still not sure whether I will ride it in SX next year," says Chad in a recent press release. "If I decide not to ride the 450 then testing will need to start on the 250."

At the same time, last year's opening round winner Kevin Windham isn't necessarily 100 per cent ready to go on the four-stroke CRF450R. His 2004/'05 Honda contract implicitly stated that K-Dub was to ride the 450 indoors and out. But Kevin's 2006/'07 Honda contract gives him the option to test and possibly choose to race a two-stroke CR250R. It makes sense for him to want to try out the two-stroke again since everyone who has beaten him in the last two years has been on a 250.

Then again, this could all be mind games. Ricky Carmichael is known for his ability to get inside his rivals' heads. Racing a 450 at the US Open may have just been a ploy to make everybody think that they need to be on 450s too – or at least try them. And while they're trying out four-strokes in supercross, Carmichael could be back home on his private tracks testing his 2006 RM250 and getting it ready to do battle.

And what if Reed isn't testing the 450 at all? Maybe he understands his competition so well that he knows Carmichael wants him to test the 450 but the whole time he's testing his YZ250.

It could be much like the scene in the movie *The Princess Bride* where the Sicilian named Vizzini is debating which of two goblets to drink from after he's instructed that one of them contains poison. One sits in front of him and the other in front of the Man in Black.

"Now, a clever man would put the poison into his own goblet because he would know that only a great fool would reach for what he was given. I am not a great fool, so I can clearly not choose the wine in front of you. But you must have known I was not a great fool, you would have counted on it, so I can clearly not choose the wine in front of me."

We probably won't know for sure who is riding which bike until the Canadian rounds at least – and maybe not until Anaheim I.

Then there's the issue of James Stewart. Rumours are flying about what's eating Bubba. After crashing out of most of the 2005 SX season he came back to win every single race in which he didn't fall. That was a total of three races. Then he missed most of the outdoor season with illnesses and injuries. At the US Open Stewart stated the day before the event that he was completely ready to race.

"I'm just out here trying to win," Bubba said. "I feel like I'm ready for this race and I just want to come out here and have fun. I want to come out here, hopefully, with a victory and just move on to '06."

However, come race day he was trucked off to the hospital in the morning with a mystery stomach illness and missed the event. So will he get himself straightened out before Anaheim I? Will he be on the new KX450F (which he's been seen testing quite a bit) or his trusty KX250? Only time will tell...

This year's wild card rider has to be two-time 125cc Western Regional SX champ and 2005 125cc National MX champ Ivan Tedesco. He's teaming up with Ricky Carmichael on Makita Suzukis in the 250cc class both indoors and out in 2006 and no-one really knows what to expect from him.

He hasn't raced a 250cc SX since he began dominating the 125cc class. Rumour has it that his hiring at Suzuki was at the request of Ricky Carmichael as he thought Ivan would be a great rider to mentor into future championships.

RC has a lot to teach and Tedesco has a lot of talent. This could be big if it all comes together.



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ANDREW SHORT IS A 125 DANGER MAN

WHO'S WHO – 250

Team Honda

- #10 Ernesto Fonseca CR250R
- #11 Travis Preston CRF450R
- #2 Jeremy McGrath CR250R (select rounds)

Team Kawasaki

- #7 James Stewart KX250
- #26 Michael Byrne KX450F

Team Makita Suzuki

- #4 Ricky Carmichael RM250 or RM-Z450
- #9 Ivan Tedesco RM250 or RM-Z450

Team Yamaha

- #22 Chad Reed YZ250 or YZ450F
- #13 Heath Voss YZ450F

Team BooKoo Honda

- #12 David Vuillemin CR250R

SoBe/Samsung Mobile Honda

- #5 Mike LaRocco CR250R
- #14 Kevin Windham CRF450R or CR250R

Subway Honda

- #31 Jason Thomas CRF450R
- #48 Jeff Gibson CRF450R
- #64 Keith Johnson CRF450R

Unbound Energy/MDK Motorsports

- #27 Nick Wey CRF450R

Rockstar Suzuki

- #43 Tyler Evans RM250

Honourable Mentions

- #15 Timmy Ferry – not yet signed as of press time
- #38 Jeff Dement – probably Maestro Suzuki RM-Z450
- #17 Robbie Reynard – not yet signed as of press time

SERIES SCHEDULE

AMP'D Mobile World SX GP

- Dec 3 Rogers Centre Toronto, Canada
- Dec 10 BC Place Stadium Vancouver, Canada

AMP'D Mobile World SX GP and AMA SX series

- Jan 7 Angel Stadium, Anaheim
- Jan 14 Bank One Park, Phoenix
- Jan 21 Angel Stadium, Anaheim
- Jan 28 SBC Park, San Francisco
- Feb 4 Angel Stadium, Anaheim
- Feb 11 Qualcomm Stadium, San Diego
- Feb 18 Edward Jones Dome, St Louis
- Feb 25 Georgia Dome, Atlanta
- March 4 RCA Dome, Indianapolis
- March 10 Daytona International Speedway
- March 18 Citrus Bowl, Orlando
- March 25 Ford Field, Detroit
- April 1 Reliant Stadium, Houston
- April 22 Texas Stadium, Dallas
- April 29 Qwest Field, Seattle
- May 6 Sam Boyd Stadium, Las Vegas

COAST TO COAST

East or West?

One characteristic of the 125cc SX championships is that the line-ups for each racing coast are generally up in the air until a few days before Anaheim I.

Many times there can be an injury to a rider that will force him to switch to the East (so as to have an extra six weeks or so to heal) which means that one of his team-mates that is due to race on the East gets bumped to West Coast duty. With this in mind we didn't figure we'd bother telling you guys where riders are supposed to be in 2006 but rather what teams the riders are on and what you can likely expect from them.

Most of the biggest news coming into '06 looks to be surrounding the Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki team that won every single 125cc championship available in 2005.

For '06 they've brought on hot rookie prospect Ryan Villopoto – who finished second at the season-finale Glen Helen National – and 2004 World 125cc Champion Ben Townley. Both of them are question

marks in supercross but their outdoor speed is well-established. Townley, however, has hired Ricky Carmichael's trainer Aldon Baker and has moved near Ricky in Florida so he's obviously not messing around.

Their team-mates will be former world and national champion Grant Langston – who is expected to defend his 2005 125cc Eastern Regional SX title – and Troy Adams who will probably turn some heads on the PC equipment once his broken femur heals.

The AMA supercross debut of Mike Alessi also has plenty of people talking. The Red Bull KTM rider won nationals in his rookie outdoor season but he has never raced on an AMA SX track – although he has shown speed in overseas supercrosses between fights with Frenchman.

Other expected '06 highlight riders include 2005 US Open 125cc champ Brett Metcalfe with Yamaha of Troy, 2005 125cc East/West Shootout winner Davi Millsaps on Team Honda, Makita Suzuki's 2005 Phoenix winner Broc Hepler, multiple 2005 race winner Andrew Short on Team Honda and Red Bull KTM's Nathan Ramsey (who won the most races on the West Coast last year).

As the saying goes, watch this space...

WHO'S WHO – 125

Team Honda

- #29 Andrew Short CRF250R
- #118 Davi Millsaps CRF250R

Monster Energy/

Pro Circuit Kawasaki

- #1E Grant Langston KX250F
- #51 Ryan Villopoto KX250F
- #101 Ben Townley KX250F
- #?? Troy Adams KX250F

Team Makita Suzuki

- #60 Broc Hepler RM-Z250

WBR Suzuki

- #36 Ryan Sipes RM-Z250
- #?? Michael LaPaglia RM-Z250
- #?? Ryan Morais RM-Z250

Yamaha of Troy

- #122 Matt Walker YZ250F
- #123 Brett Metcalfe YZ250F
- #?? Andrew McFarlane YZ250F

SoBe/Samsung Mobile Honda

- #24 Josh Grant CRF250R
- #42 Tommy Hahn CRF250R
- #55 Joaquim Rodrigues CRF250R
- #132 Billy Laninovich CRF250R
- #151 Jake Weimer CRF250R

Team BooKoo Honda

- #141 Steve Boniface CRF250R
- #252 Justin Keeney CRF250R

Unbound Energy/MDK Motorsports

- #401 Eric McCrummen CRF250R

Rockstar Suzuki

- #40 Ryan Mills RM-Z250
- #41 Jason Lawrence RM-Z250
- #52 Sean Hamblin RM-Z250

Motosport Outlet Honda

- #35 Paul Carpenter CRF250R
- #33 Danny Smith CRF250R
- #37 Kelly Smith CRF250R
- #54 Bobby Kinyr CRF250R

Honourable Mentions

The MotoworldRacing.com team. As of press time there is no word as to what their programme will be like – although they look to be on Yamahas this year. Stephane Roncada will be riding for the team in 2006, although his team-mates are yet to be determined.

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RUNNING INTO OUR 3RD YEAR WITH O.R.P.A...TAKING THE SPORT FURTHER

words by **JEFF KOCAN** courtesy of RacerX photo by **STEVE COX**

PUMP'D!

AMA SX has got a new sponsor, Bubba's got a new number and the 125 class has got a new enfant terrible...

I'm writing this on the eve of the Toronto Supercross, the opening round of the newly named Amp'd Mobile World Supercross GP/Amp'd Mobile AMA Supercross Series. It's the beginning of a whole new season of racing, a fresh start where everyone begins from scratch again. And even though the last season only ended, like, three days ago there's still a sense of excitement in the air.

We've already had some pretty big announcements about the upcoming year. That new name for the US supercross series comes courtesy of new title sponsorship from Amp'd Mobile, an up-and-coming mobile phone and technology company. This deal will see some new technology coming to our sport as Amp'd Mobile handset owners (I guess 'phone' has suddenly become passé) will have access to exclusive supercross-related streaming video content, including interviews and race recaps.

What's more, the company will also provide live video clips of the races, presumably – although my presumptions are frequently way, way wrong – with an eye toward eventual full-event broadcasts. I don't know if I'd be too excited about staring at my, um, handset for three straight hours to watch a race but I will admit that my inner technology geek is looking forward to checking this out.

Now we Americans like to think we're far more advanced than anyone else on the planet but we're years behind the rest of the world in mobile phone technology. I've seen similar offers for the Premiership in years past but it's nice to know we're catching up a bit (after all, we've only recently caught on the whole custom-ringtones-and-text-messaging thing). If the video quality is at least decent it will be a very cool service and one that should take off pretty quickly in the moto community.

Supercross isn't the only one bringing a new partner to the dance, though, as Toyota have signed on as the title sponsor for the AMA MX Nationals. For a series that languished without a corporate backer for far too long, the Japanese auto-maker was a good score. Motocross will probably never be as popular in the States as supercross – which by its nature is far more spectator-friendly – but the fact that a major company was interested in backing the series can provide at least some comfort to the hard-core outdoor fans among us.

So it's two new sponsors for a highly anticipated new season. And today we got news of yet another

change – Team Kawasaki's James Stewart has decided to drop his well-known #259, opting to run #7 instead as his 125cc championships have given him the right to choose the single-digit number vacated by the retired Greg Albertyn.

Bubba's decision has taken a lot of people by surprise. He chose #259 as a tribute to Tony Haynes, a

And as much as I like the idea of trademarking uncommon, higher numbers, I still think there's nothing cooler than a single digit on your plate. Now if we can just get RC to run that #1...

And what would a motocross current events discussion be without mention of everyone's new favorite three-digit rider – good old #800, Mike Alessi?



promising young racer who was paralysed just as his career was beginning to take off. Many felt Haynes could have become the first prominent African-American motocrosser, a legacy his friend Stewart has since taken up.

Now, I don't think anyone feels James has somehow turned his back on Haynes. I'd say the surprise stems more from the fact that Stewart was one of the first racers, along with Travis Pastrana, to really try to brand a three-digit number after the AMA introduced the new permanent-number system. As with Pastrana's #199, Stewart had become synonymous with #259...which might actually be why he felt the need to change it up.

Bubba's first year in the 250 class was, by most measures, a disaster. And as noble as his intentions were with the old number, I'm sure the need for a fresh start probably outweighed anything else on the table.

The Bercy SX saw a little French Justice meted out to young Michael as he was on the receiving end of sucker punches and ghost-ridden bikes and mid-race threats and all sorts of deliciously reprehensible and juvenile behaviour.

You know, love him or hate him – and I don't think there's much middle ground out there right now – you have to admit, the Alessi Factor has brought loads of weird and freaky drama to the races. Just last month I went all syrupy about the kid, theorizing that he would probably grow up quickly and become a fan favourite. But now? Now I'm not really sure I even care.

But I do know that if he's on the track, I want to be watching. You never know what's going to happen with Mike out there and his reputation precedes him these days like a battering ram. It's all eyes on #800 right now and it's nearly impossible to look away.

It's gonna be a fun year.





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WALKER'S



WORLD

SX GOD...

... or should that be SX Cod? After all Walker's sure to be flailing about like a fish out of water at the Cardiff SX - but at least his bike will be right!

Words by Geoff Walker Photos by Ray Chuss

ANOTHER MONTH and another attempt by Suttly to cause me injury and embarrassment. This time - like most - it started with a wee phone call...

Dawg: "What number do you want?"

WW: "Eh?"

Dawg: "For the Cardiff supercross."

WW: "I can't do that!"

Dawg: "You'll be reet"

WW: "What the ***k does that mean?"

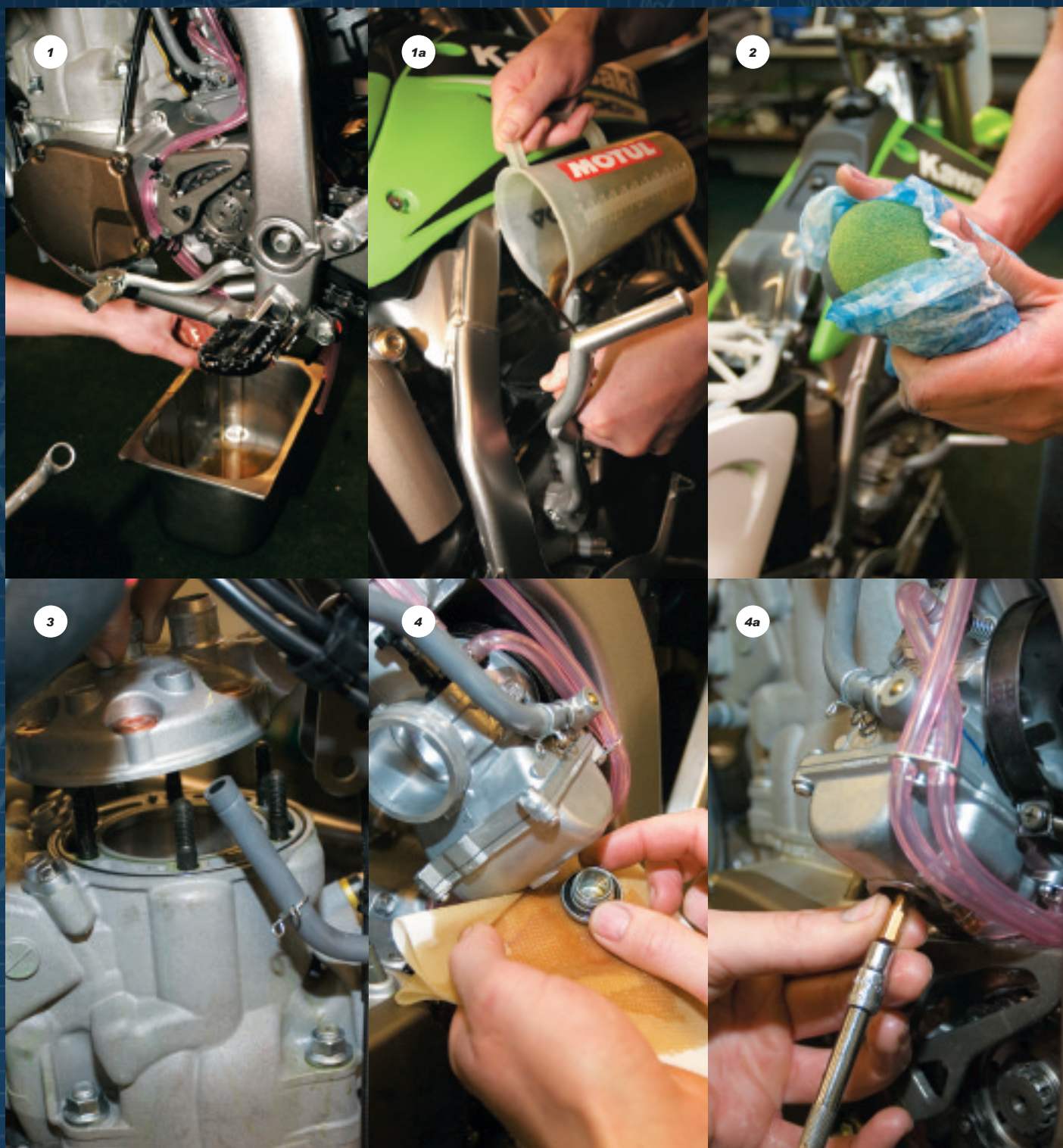
Dawg: "It means that you'll be okay."

WW: "I won't be okay you nut, you're just tryin' to get me hurt!"

Dawg: "Yep! Anyway shush, shouldn't you be down the gym or something? I'll choose you a number - you just make sure you get there with the KX!"

Click...





WELL THAT told me. So there I was with the '05 KX two-fiddy on the pre-sale strip down and only a handful of days to prep it for the supercross. I had arm pump already!

But exactly one phone call to Paul Cross at Kawasaki later and I was on my way to Bourne End to collect a sparkly-new '06 KX two-fiddy.

My second call was to Louis at Stickerman to sort some backgrounds and numbers. After our little conversation I decided to call in at Stickerman HQ in Wiltshire to sort out the backgrounds and after Louis' suggestion some shirt printing on my sparkly new No Fear kit. Well, I figured if I was going to make a fool of myself (and then some – Suttly) I was at least

going to look the part for the experience...

The KX was the weapon that had sat at the Dirt Bike Show for four days so it needed a good check over.

1 I drained the gearbox oil and replaced the stock stuff with some Motul 5100 ester techno-synthese 4T oil. This is the very same oil that Mickael Pichon used in his box to take his world championships back in the days when he was onboard the two-stroke Suzukis.

2 The air filter must be oiled. Some people run a dry filter for supercross but if you oil it correctly there's no need to risk getting dirt in

your motor. Make sure you give the filter plenty of drying off time after you oil it.

3 Going to a supercross is different than going out for a bit of a rip round. As it decided to snow the day I picked the bike up there was no chance to be running the bike in. To stop any little problems I whipped the head off. This allows the crud to be removed from the piston crown and the head.

4 The carb was next. One size smaller on the main jet for starters as the final jetting can be sorted on the day. The stale fuel from the bike's journey from Japan was also removed.

GEOFF WALKER's one of the most respected MX technicians in the country (well, so he tells us) with a CV that reads like a who's who of British MX. In all the years he's been in the game, the 43-year-old Irishman's spun spanners for the likes of Carl Nunn, Tom Church, Mark Hucklebridge, Robbie Herring, Philippe Dupasquier and Suttly.

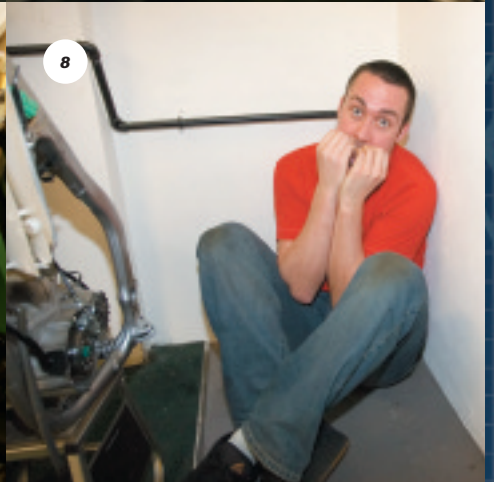
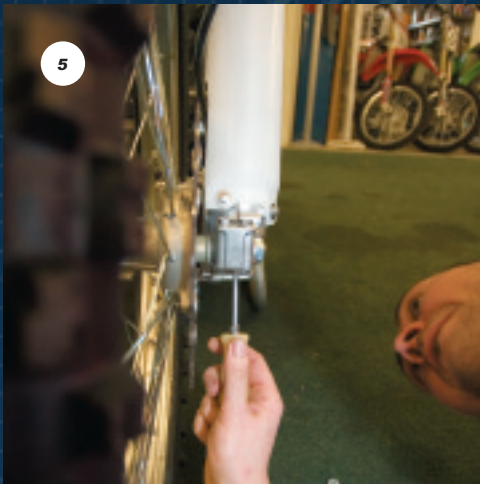
During this time he's worked for JHK Kawasaki Japan, Kawasaki UK, Bott KTM and RWJ HRC Honda where he helped Herring to the '96 British Open title. A former racer and Pro-ranked downhill MTBer, Geoff's notoriously inept at getting his copy and photos in on time, causing huge headaches in the DBR office – but we still love/tolerate his big-chinned Oirishness...



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5 The suspension is a major factor in supercross. For riders I've worked for in the past I would have revalved the forks and shock as the guys on the bike would be able to maximise the suspension.

For myself I went for the quick fix as there was a major lack-of-time factor. The forks have a simple change to the secondary spring rate with the addition of 10ml of 5wt fork oil. This oil will start to work at the very bottom of the stroke to help stop bottoming.

I set the comp and rebound clickers to eight

clicks from the hardest setting.

The shock is set to seven clicks out on low-speed compression and one turn out on high-speed. The rebound setting is set to eight clicks out and the sag is set to 105mm.

6 The look of the bike comes under my scrutiny next. The Stickerman backgrounds are pretty easy to fit. You just need to make sure there's enough heat to make them easy to work. Never overheat the graphics as they'll overstretch and ultimately fall apart.

7 Next for the supercross weapon was the 'front to back'. This means a good check of every fixing on the bike to make sure there are no loose nuts or bolts. It's very rare to find anything loose but you do feel better after you have checked the puppy.

8 With everything checked and looking totally bobbydazzler it's time for me to go into a corner and start to panic about what the hell I'm about to get myself into (Cardiff hospital you say? – Suttly)!

star turn KX ON TV!

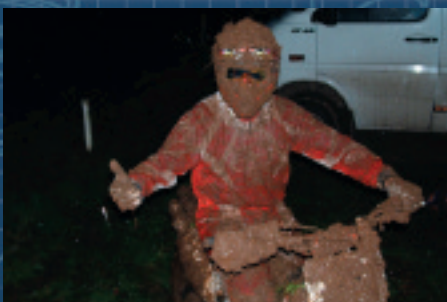
The chance to appear on primetime television doesn't come along very often (since they cancelled Father Ted) so when it does you get right in there! Big Al shouted out of the MotoXtreme office to ask if anyone was interested in riding in a mock-up race for top TV gorefest programme Casualty at the famous Frome motocross track. The immediate answer came back from Thomas 'this could be my big break' Brown, Base 'what gasket?' Mont and myself as a resounding 'YES!' Let's face it, bikes have landed all of us in casualty quite a few times already...

Jim Webb of the Frome club had been given the task of bringing together a motley crew of riders for background work for this edition of the programme and on the day he had done a grand job of finding enough of us X-Factor wannabes to get the job done. The long-termers had just had a new piston as shown in the last issue so it was ready for action under the lights and rolling cameras.

Myself, Mont, TB and young Yik Worm (along for the 50 quid extra's fee) all met up for the 6am start and we arrived on schedule at the track for breakfast. The whole filming thing is a bit strange really – the entire day's shoot was going to take up around five minutes on the finished programme and there must have been a hundred people on site including production staff, extras, riders, catering and track staff. Riding in November is never a great plan as it is a little wet and Casualty day was no exception. We started off in sunshine and were split into two groups for the first part of filming. The other group went off to do the

finish scene while we watched. It was quite amazing to see the make up people with a bucket of mud, walking around splashing the actors' gear... Very rock n' roll. Stop, start, stop, start. That is pretty much how the entire day went and it was great fun until the rain started. We had to ride behind the three stuntmen and look like we were racing. This really wasn't a problem as it was like Death Race 2000 to be at the front of the chasing pack for that shot of glory. I was laughing so hard I nearly came off!

The day at Casualty came to a close as the light faded and we all rolled back to our vehicles, covered in ***t but still smilin'. The KX loved being in the limelight and I think it went off and negotiated a deal to appear in a couple of episodes of Byker Grove. Cheeky! Look out for the KX two-fiddy front wheel in one of the January episodes of Casualty – and if you don't see it you may just catch a glimpse of TB, Base-Mont or maybe even Yik Worm cheering in the crowd...





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A very big thanks to... Hot Tub, Robin (crazy legs) @ Molson, Jonners (shorty) @ Molson, Vic @ Motul, Jeremy and Sue (www.umbriatraitours.com), Craig @ DEP, 2C wheels and discs, Kawasaki UK, Rees @ Renthal, BF Goodridge, Michelin, Matt (P-Wood) and Dale (P-Chops) @ 661 and Sunline, TB and Big Al @ MotoXtreme, Rob @ No Fear, H and TJ and all the rest of the three-day wrecking crew. Roll on '06!



magazine machine



LOST CAUSE?

Walker gets the KX250 prepped for a three-day thrash in the Lake District – then discovers he's going to Umbria, not Cumbria!

Words by Geoff Walker

THE LAST adventure on this year's tour of fun for the KX two-fiddy two-smoker included a 4,000-mile round trip to the land of pasta and strange leaning towers...

It was time for the umpteenth annual Molson ride out adventure and my invitation was among the very, very last to arrive! Anyway, I didn't take it too personally as Robin and Jonners (the owners of Molson) are bonkers so I figure that was one excuse. Only joking men!

The schedule for the trip was pretty punishing for the 17-man group. Myself and Hot Tub took the truck out on Monday with 15 bikes on board while the rest of the nutters flew down to Rome on the Wednesday for the three days of mayhem.

As usual my lack of organisation left me with a bit to do upon arrival at the Umbria Trail Tours HQ which is situated about an hour-and-a-half north east of Rome in a place called Citta di Castello. This area is made for off-roading as all the locals seem to love it. We had people coming out of their houses to see the truck and the activity as I prepped the KX for the three days of punishment.

Jeremy and Sue Goodier are Brits abroad and they travelled around Europe looking for a place to start a new project involving their passion for off-road (and shopping – SL). The rest is history as they found a haven with some great trails and their new business began.

Anyway, I was knackered after the trip and aided only by a fine cup of Sue's English tea

and HT's endless enthusiasm I was able to get on with the prep. Job number one was to fit the oversize fuel tank which I had borrowed from Martin 'zip-tie' Lear.

Every other bike on the ride was a four-stroke so they were going to have no problems with fuel. I wanted to run a larger tank as Jeremy said we wouldn't be seeing much civilisation as we'd be in the mountains most of the time. The fuel tank fitted like a dream and after making sure that all the cables and hoses were free from any obstruction I was happy that the tank would be a great help for running a good three hours on trail pace to make it to the service stops.

Next on the agenda was the tyre fitting, spoke checking and chain adjusting. For the trip the guys at BF Goodridge had sent their road legal front enduro tyre down for a test. I fitted this with a mousse to the 2C front wheel and a Michelin rear with a heavy duty tube went on the 18ins 2C rear wheel. I was pretty happy at this stage as the heavens were well and truly open above us. I was gonna need some grip!

The Renthal chain, bars and sprockets wear fantastically well as you would expect so this was going to be another good test for them. I haven't had to adjust the chain in 10 hours and I still didn't need to touch it. Superb!

The spokes on the 2C wheels are pretty much the same story as I've checked and tweaked them once and they've stayed true through approximately 35 hours use so far.

A Sunline brush-guard was fitted to the throttle side on my bars as I hate trees getting involved and pulling my front brake on as I go through the bad boys.

Finally, Sarah at DEP got me out of the **** by sending me a sparkly new enduro silencer to go with my 40-hour-old DEP front pipe. This pipe is legendary and turns the KX into one seriously user-friendly off-road scrambly machine. Or 'bike' for short...

It was absolutely fantastic riding for all three of the days. The weather was unkind for two of them making the going really extreme at times – there was one very special 31km stretch which took around five hours to complete. It was the dogs'.

We had ropes out and all sorts to get the bikes up the hills. There are plenty of easier routes to take but the general feeling with the riders was to make it as difficult as possible so we had plenty to bullshit about over dinner.

Day three was the only dry day and it was exceptional. The trails flowed and we rode across every possible type of terrain you could imagine. In three days of riding the KX only had one problem and that was one little rear mudguard bolt that came loose.

Aside from that I didn't have to lay a spanner on the KX for all three days. It performed fantastically well and we both enjoyed a truly superb three days of riding and a big group of very tired humans all left Italy with big smiles across their faces!

*'Where's the dry line?'
After cutting his teeth on
hardpack tracks in Brazil
Europe was a shock to
Antonio's system*





BRAZILIAN BLEND!

The fastest-ever rider to come out of South America, Antonio Balbi learned to ride on bone-hard, sun-baked tracks - hardly ideal preparation for the GP circus...

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

**IN TIMES OF CHANGE..
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Balbi raced for the Rest of the World team at Bercy

THE SOUTHERN hemisphere has given us many of the outstanding motocrossers of the last 15 years but to date they've all come from two continents – Africa and Australasia.

Now Antonio Balbi, South America's fastest-ever motocrosser, is set to expand the horizons of the sport! But the 23-year-old from Belo Horizonte in Brazil got off to a false start when he landed in Europe last spring. "I arrived in March but in April I broke my femur. I tried to come back to race at France but I already knew that I needed another operation and in the end I was out for four months."

Still, to his credit, the Brazilian and Latin American MX champ and Brazilian SX champ – "there is no Latin American SX series" – didn't give up and by August was back in Europe to qualify for two out of three GPs.

"I knew that it would be more difficult so I can be pleased with what I achieved. It was not easy this year at the few GPs I was able to attend. The tracks in Europe are very difficult – and [there is] a lot of mud!

"We have a lot of races back home. But we just don't have such challenging tracks. My hometown track in Belo Horizonte is the exception – it is a great track, nice ground and lay-out but it is the only one. All of the others

are very easy, only flat hardpack – there is not the variety like in Europe.

"I did a good race in Germany to qualify but the mud was just unbelievable. That race was wild, I never rode in such conditions before. And sand was a really big problem at first. I mean, at the start of the weekend in Lierop it was okay but by the last laps of the second moto it was nearly impossible to get round.

"I already trained for one month in Belgium last summer – Lommel, Honda Park, all good tracks for training – and I think that I will go there for practice a lot when I return this year but I will be based in Italy."

Antonio's family name exposes the fact that he is of Italian descent – "my grandfather emigrated to Brazil from Genova" – but that is not the link. "I don't have any contact to family anymore in Italy, perhaps I try to find them this year. My native language is Portuguese and I didn't actually speak any Italian until this year when I came over to race."

He raced this year on a Yamaha prepared by Ricci Racing but the whole deal is financed by Vaz. "They are a Brazilian company who make chains and sprockets. They have a factory in Bologna and Team Ricci used their products last year. I am talking for 2006 with

H Racing but again with Vaz as main sponsor."

With a supercross background – Antonio was one of the Rest of the World stars invited to Bercy this winter – North America is also clearly beckoning.

"Of course it is my dream. I have been to America for a few races but I was a complete privateer. I think the riders from South Africa, Australia and New Zealand have proved that it is a good route to America to come and race in Europe but the decision to come to Europe was made for me. Vaz see a bigger market for their products in Europe at the moment.

"But I don't think Europe is an easy option. The riders in Europe have a very high standard. In the USA there are only a few really fast riders outdoors but in the GPs everyone at the start is a very good rider. In America Carmichael takes five seconds to the second guy and 10 seconds to the rest but if I lose five seconds to Everts I won't qualify. Here in Europe there is nothing to choose between 10th and 20th and any of the top 10 are capable of winning a moto."

He's under no illusions how big a learning curve he faces in 2006 but once it all starts to click for the stylish boy from Brazil those first world championship points can't be far away.

medical milway

Alan Milway is a qualified sports scientist who runs MX Fitness specialising in training motocross and enduro riders. For more information on how Alan can help you train go to his website www.mxfitness.co.uk or call him on 07810 827427

COLD FEET?

Frightened that illness will interrupt your off-season training schedule? A few sensible precautions can go a long way to keeping you well this winter...

Words by Alan Milway
Photos by Paul Thomas/Motion Imaging

IT'S THE time of year when short days, long nights and poor weather often conspire to get in the way of chances to ride and also attempts to train. Add to this the increased chance of getting a cold over the next few months and this important time of year for your training can be easily interrupted.

So just how can we try to prevent colds, deal with the bloody things when we can't prevent them and make the most of the time we have to train and ride?

The common cold is prevalent at this time of year and is often passed around an office or home. Viruses that cause colds are passed from one person to another as droplets in the air. Sneezing and coughing produces more droplets but shaking hands with people, sharing a drinks bottle or even just gripping an infected door handle can lead to the spread of infection.

The virus multiplies in the nose, throat, sinuses and windpipe so consequently these areas are usually where the symptoms are found. Flu has similar symptoms to a cold but they are more severe, usually come with a side order of aching muscles and can last for up to several weeks. Many people complaining of flu

are often just suffering from a cold or, as ladies like to put it, 'man flu'!

There is no cure for colds or flu. Antibiotics treat bacterial infections and do not work to combat colds. However, once you have caught one strain of cold you have the natural defences to prevent further infection from that strain. Flu jabs contain a strain of flu that is predicted for that year. Prevention is the best way and this means hygiene and another look over your diet is important.

Some sportsmen are extremely cautious to prevent colds and although some methods are a little over the top for most of us, an athlete whose income revolves around his or her health should be a little wary. I have heard of cases of almost neurotic levels of hand washing to clean away any contact with communal surfaces, avoidance of public places and one athlete who would not go to the cinema due to fear of catching a cold from a fellow film fan!

Now not many of us will revert to being a hermit and retreating to the hills to avoid illness but some precautions are sensible. Washing your hands regularly and good personal hygiene are extra important. Also, be aware that

if you are in a packed shopping centre on a Saturday morning you are probably surrounded by viruses and at a big risk of catching one.

Diet is one of the best ways to help prevent and combat being at the mercy of a cold for too long. The immune system is very sensitive to reduced intake of vitamins and minerals and a fall in levels of these can lead to a fall in the level of effectiveness of the immune system. For example, a deficiency of zinc (a mineral found in meat, nuts, seeds and wholegrains) can lead to slower wound healing and a higher risk of skin infections. Vitamin A is also very important to the immune system and can be found in liver, eggs and milk.

Ask yourself whether your diet is rich in fresh fruit and vegetables. With less travelling to races there is less excuse for eating service station/burger van food so include fruit with cereal at breakfast, have a side salad with main meals and drink more juices.

A healthy, balanced diet is all that is required – vitamin supplements are not necessary if this is followed as more is not better when above the recommended daily intake. At best you will just break down the unwanted extra, at worst





levels can actually build up and hinder other functions. Write down what you ate this week and if fast food or processed food makes up the bulk and fruit only made a guest appearance it's time to speak to someone who can point you in the right direction!

It is known that physical exercise is also a good way to boost the immune system. Regular exercise can help reduce the chance of sore throats, stuffy noses etc. However, if exercise is performed for several hours a day on numerous days in the week it can actually lead to a fall in the effectiveness of the immune system and may increase the likelihood of catching a cold by suppressing the body's defences as it works hard to supply energy for the demands of strenuous exercise.

Also exercise causes increased rate and depth of breathing, drawing more air into the body and increasing the chances of catching a virus. You are most susceptible after exercise has just finished so get out of wet clothes, put on a beanie and get warm and dry quickly.

It is possible to catch illness very early before it has taken hold and take preventative measures. One good indicator is resting heart

rate. A rise in resting heart rate shows fatigue or the approach of illness. Measure your heart rate first thing in the morning every other day for a week to get a base reading. A change from this by more than a few beats may hint at the onset of a cold.

It's Sod's Law – you've been training and riding and just as you're getting into a good routine and feeling good about things you catch a cold. So should you rest up for a week or two to get better or carry on through? Many adverts for cold and flu remedies imply that you can carry on as normal if you take their medicine – this is not wise regardless of what they say. Catching the illness early and resting is important and will speed recovery. Reducing stress will also help. A day off work at the start of the cold is better than being sent home and having to lay in bed all weekend.

You should also be careful of what exercise you do – however, research does not indicate you need to stop light, low-intensity exercise provided symptoms are above the neck. If your symptoms have taken hold below the neck then rest up and put on The Great Outdoors or Nitro Circus.

If it's a runny nose and you're a little bunged up then change sessions to light exercise bike riding and you'll be able to stop your cardio fitness from taking too big a dip. Obviously, this advice should be taken with consultation with your doctor.

Training in the winter months plays a big part in your performance on the bike and for those who race it will have a big effect on results come spring. Keeping a good training routine is important and including a variety of cardiovascular exercises is a great base from which to start. Modern gyms are a good place to train and provide a warm, dry environment when it's lashing down outside. Many offer classes during weekday evenings which can help with exercise routines and also motivate you to do supplementary sessions around them.

For those who are preparing for next season's racing, staying healthy and including sensible relevant training during the week is important. And for those who just want to enjoy their riding, it should still be looked at as you'll be in a better state to get the most fun out on your dirt bike at the weekends – and that's the best reason of all!



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FULL CIRCLE

A world champ called Everts and a three-way fight to the death for the British crown – sounds familiar, doesn't it? But we're not talking 2005, Jack's history lesson this month comes from 1975...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

WHAT A cracking concerto of motocross action we enjoyed in 2005. Two hard-fought world championships, three riders romping into the final round of the British MX1 championship neck and neck for the title and America nicking the MX des Nations from host nation France.

Things were remarkably similar 30 years earlier – an Everts chased a world championship and three classy contenders for a British Open crown careered into the last race two points apart!

Stefan's dad Harry took his first world championship in 1975. Riding Austrian twin-carb, two-stroke Puchs, the shy but shatteringly fast Belgian with a limp won four grands prix – in Finland, Poland, Yugoslavia and, on a sun-scorched weekend in England, round those dry, chalky slopes of the South Downs at Ladies' Mile, Chalton, near Portsmouth. That summer was one of the hottest of the last century, both metaphorically (for motocross) and meteorologically!

Harry's main rivals make fascinating reading and illustrate the importance of the former communist Eastern Bloc in European motocross history. Bultaco's Californian ex-pat Jim Pomeroy won in Belgium and at Wohlen in Switzerland while Suzuki's Willi Bauer tasted victory at Sabadell in Spain and Holice in Czechoslovakia. But Czech stars Zdenek Velky and Jaroslav Falta swept their CZs to victory in West Germany, France and Austria, while Russian soldier Eugenji Ribalchenko secured the only grand prix victory of his career at Jarva in Sweden!

Everts eventually beat consistent 1973 champ Hakan Andersson (Yamaha) by 25 points with ill-fated German Bauer – who would

end his racing life in Scotland three years later – third overall.

In the UK 1975 heralded a brave new dawn. Out went the traditional 125, 250 and 500cc British championships and in came a single seeded top 30 British Open series, packed with an explosive mixture of experienced old guard and ambitious young guns.

The former included a raft of national champions. The only man to win 250 and 500cc titles in one season – 1974 double champion Vic 'Haggis' Allan – lined up alongside reigning 125 king Malcolm Davis, both mounted on Bultacos. Big John 'the Baron' Banks rode a CCM, Welshman Andy Robertson another Bultaco, Dave Bickers a CZ and Bryan 'Wild' Wade's Suzuki was one of only two Japanese bikes in the pack!

Other veteran grand prix contenders like CCM trio Vic Eastwood, Jimmy Aird and Andy Lee and Kurt Nicoll's dad Dave, on a Maico, faced the eager kids who were headed by Carl Nunn's father Stuart (CZ) and an outrageous blond bombshell from Hampshire, Graham Noyce, mounted initially on a Husqvarna before court action contentiously forced him back over to Maico.

Then there were Doug Wheeler Husqvarna twins Roger Harvey and Rob Hooper, Birmingham's Vaughan Semmens (Bultaco), 19-year-old East Anglian Geoff Mayes (Berrill CZ) and the 'Cheshire Charger' Pete Mathia (Montesa). And let's not forget rugged northerners Bob Wright, Norman Barrow and Andy Ainsworth, New Zealander Ivan Miller and stylish West Countryman Rob Taylor.

This glittering cast would contest the new look six-round series, sponsored by weekly newspaper Motor Cycle, which kicked off at Matchams Park in March. Vic Allan and John



Wild-eyed Scot Vic Allan became the first British Open champ in '75



Stuart Nunn leads Allan at Pickwick Lodge, Corsham

Banks traded wins in the demanding 40-minute plus two lap races. But wily little Welshman 'Yanto' Robertson, a former 250 champ, sneaked two seconds and topped the table by a single point from Banks. Allan and youth pack leader Stuart Nunn tied for third with Vic Eastwood and Bob Wright's factory Montesa sharing fifth.

'The big battle is obviously between the British-built CCMs and the Spanish Bultaco,' wrote Motor Cycle's motocross editor Martin Christie in the programme – price 15p! – for round two at Pickwick Lodge, Corsham, on May 18.

The fabulous, fast hillside venue witnessed a pivotal moment in British MX. 'Britain's young lions have stepped forth to meet the challenge of grand prix length motos and contest the domination of the established big names,' wrote Christie. 'Not for a decade in British scrambling (!) has anyone done that more forcefully than 18-year-old Graham Noyce.'

Vic Allan's Bultaco had nonetheless seized a 10-point series lead as Banks suffered mechanical problems in both motos. Nunn passed Robertson into second place, Noyce now lay a threatening fourth, Kiwi Ivan Miller joined



Banks in fifth place and Eastwood, also hitting problems with his CCM, tied seventh in the table with his beefy Cumbrian team-mate Norman Barrow.

The stars converged on the Royal Welsh Agricultural Showground at Builth Wells for round three a fortnight later. The programme price had soared to 20p but a lucky programme number would receive an 'Everite' watch presented by H Samuel, 'Britain's largest jeweller'!

Mark Eastwood's dad Vic stormed to a brace of brilliant wins, despite his CCM losing third gear in both races round the bumpy, hardpack dustbowl at Llanelwedd. To my amazement I'd filled in my programme results like a good old-fashioned enthusiast (and no, I didn't win the watch!).

Vic beat Banks and a Bultaco trio of Allan, Davis and Miller in race one with Barrow sixth and Noyce seventh ahead of Bristol's Rob Taylor, Roger Harvey and Jimmy Aird. In race two Noycey nicked second from 'Haggis' and Wade's Suzuki. Taylor and Malcolm Davis fought for fifth ahead of a skirmish involving stormin' Norman Barrow, Harvey, Nunn and

Pete Mathia who finished in that order.

The title chase tightened up tantalisingly after another sunny day of high drama at Corse Hill Farm near Tisbury in Gloucestershire which would soon be lost to intensive farming. Despite 30-year-old Banks nursing a finger injury from Namur's Belgian GP and Noyce being sick with stomach cramps, they fought a fierce first race duel until Graham banged his head on an overhanging tree branch (which was sawn off for race two!). Dazed, he veered off the track, recovering to defend second place from Allan, Eastwood, Barrow and Nunn.

Banks holeshot race two, leaving Noyce to thread his way through a mighty scrap involving Allan, Harvey and Bryan Wade. Then, on a dramatic last lap, Vic's 360 Bultaco expired leaving him to push over the line ninth behind former European champion Dave Bickers. Eastwood inherited third ahead of Nunn and Harvey but 'Haggis' clung on to a narrow championship lead with only eight points covering the top four. Game on!

Round five convened on a lovely late summer's day at beautiful Beenhaim Park, Berkshire, on September 21. Mortimer and

District Motor Cycle Club press secretary Marie Ilsley wrote the programme notes. 'Some years back Don Rickman said to me "I have a brilliant young boy in Graham Noyce. He will make the grade." How true Don was and who would know better than he!'

But it was the elder statesmen who took charge once Harvey had holeshot race one, moonshot the notorious bombhole and hit the ejector button in mid-air, remounting amazingly unhurt! "I was peering round Haggis's leg to see if he was on the 250 with a green number plate and I forgot to stop!"

Allan had indeed chosen to ride his 250 and came under pressure from Banks and Eastwood but John had to stop and tighten up loose handlebar clamps. So 32-year-old Eastwood took control with Noyce third and Banks rejoining fifth behind Ivan Miller. Harvey fought ferociously back to ninth behind team-mate Rob Hooper then whiskered a plug on the last lap!

'Rolls' Noyce headed race two but Eastwood soared past in mid-air across the bombhole and Graham fell further behind Allan and Banks, who later retired feeling ill. Tenacious brawls

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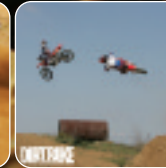
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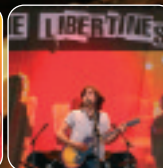
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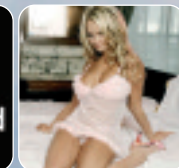
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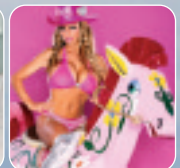
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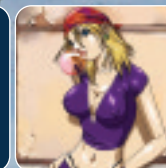
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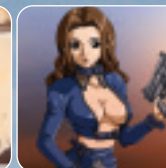
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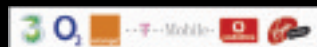
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Lift off at Builth Wells – Bryan Wade (#7) leads Roger Harvey (#17), Malcolm Davis (#2), Gordon Adsett (#20), Rob Taylor (#8), Jimmy Aird (#9), John Banks (#3) and Dave 'Daisy' Nicoll (#12)



Roger Harvey and Norman Barrow battle it out at Builth Wells

ensued as Noyce tried in vain to wrest second place back from Allan and Miller beat Robertson, Geoff Mayes and Hooper into fourth spot. But Banks' misfortune meant he dropped out of the title chase which 'Haggis' still led by just two points from Eastwood with Noyce seven points further back in third.

A week later a sensational season would be decided at West Stow Heath, near Bury St Edmunds, where the programme cost a mere 10p! The rough, sandy Suffolk circuit suited Noyce. He stormed to an emphatic first race victory ahead of homeboy Banks, who ignored a last-lap signal from CCM owner Alan Clews which said simply 'Eastwood'. So Vic, having forced past Allan's 250 Bultaco, had to settle for third. They now tied the title lead with Noyce's Maico only two points behind!

The dashing Hampshireman again shot to the front in race two then missed a gear on the second lap, crashed over the bars and broke a collarbone. And poor Eastwood had already fallen downfield. Urged on by an enthusiastic crowd, he charged back to third in five drastic laps, catching leader Allan – now mounted on a 360 – and his shadow Andy Robertson. But Eastwood's superhuman effort took its toll and the two Bultacos maintained their advantage, Allan allowing Andy through in the closing stages as he realised the first ever British Open title was his – by a single point!

With Nunny fourth, Mayes fifth and top 10 positions for Harvey, Hooper and Vaughan Semmens, though, the new generation was on the march!

"I only had to beat Allan in the last race of the series," grimaces Vic, even today. "I set off second behind Stuart Nunn but clipped his back wheel and went over the bars. I was really wild with Stuart and went like merry hell. I got up to third place but didn't know it. And after trying so hard, I hadn't enough energy to do more. I'd gone too fast too soon. I should have taken my time. I was always impetuous to get to the front!"

Vic Allan had been voted on to the ACU motocross committee the previous year and actually drew up the revolutionary blueprint for a single British Open Championship. "That formula stayed virtually unchanged for 15 years and helped produce three British world champions," the chunky little Scot points out proudly. "And I won it! Until then, I'd gone flat



Harry Everts points his Puch to victory at the '75 British GP at Chalton near Portsmouth

out to win every race. I realised at last that it wasn't possible. I tried to use my head. To win when I had the chance. Points make prizes and win titles. But I was under a lot of pressure. All my income rested on a bonus for that championship!"

Vic Eastwood never did win a national title but Graham Noyce was destined to win the next four Open championships and the 1979 500cc world crown. And, at the venerable age of 43, Vic Allan came out of retirement to win another inaugural series – the first official British thumper championship – on a KTM!

That was 1988. The same year the French first fought America in a mega MX des Nations. But that story will have to wait until next month...



Graham Noyce lets rip (did he ever ride any other way?) at Tirley

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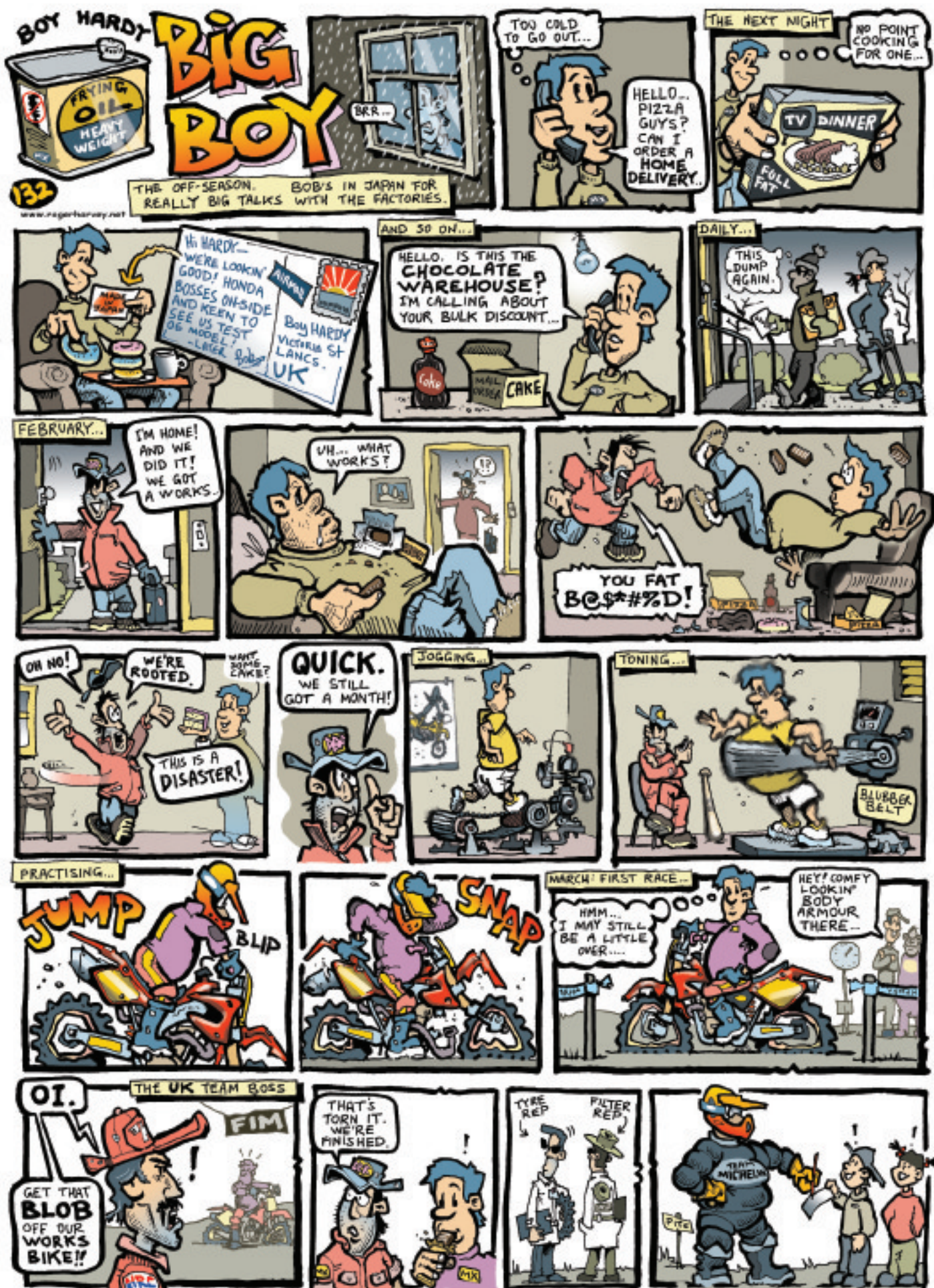
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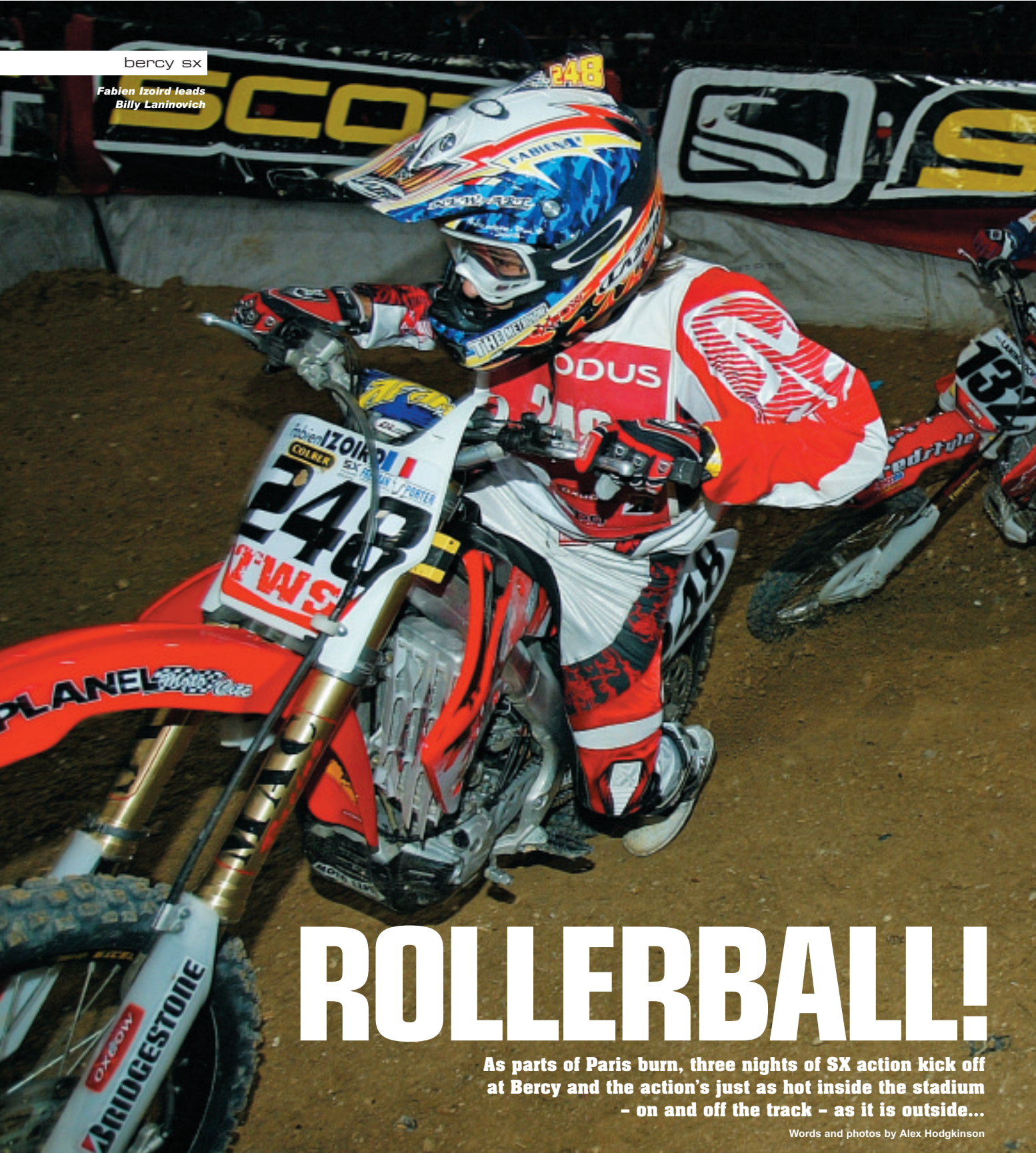
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Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson



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"I DIDN'T think anything could top last year when the crowd were ready to lynch Alessi after his take-out on Leuret but it did," reckons Roddy MacLeod as we chat Sunday dinner time after the violence on the Parisian streets spills over into the Bercy arena on the first two nights of 2005's SX extravaganza.

But it isn't ghetto kids without a future torching coaches, it's a pair of Gallic guerrillas who are gunning for the Alessi brothers.

"I'm ashamed that they are French,"

Lariviere press agent Francoise Depierre has admitted half-an-hour earlier as we discuss with the Parisian sports press the actions of Steve Boniface and Eric Sorby, a significant part of which is witnessed live by millions on Eurosport.

And the Alessi boys' manager Alison Turner is forthright in her views as we await the decision of the French federation jury on whether the rogue riders will be allowed to race Sunday. "Mike and Jeff are still in their rooms for their own security. The jury have disqualified Jeff without even looking at the tape anyway and I won't let Mike race today for his own safety if Sorby is still out there."

Alison has already had to lay down one ultimatum in the early hours of Saturday morning after a post-race physical assault on Mike Alessi by Boniface in the pits. "I had to do

something. It seems like some riders think they can beat the **** out of the Alessi boys and blame it on them!"

By 3am Boniface is knocking on papa Tony Alessi's door in the Novotel with a written apology, seven hours before the deadline after which the police would have been asked to consider charges of mistreatment of a minor (Mike is still 17, Jeff 16) – a crime which can carry four years in the clink in France.

"I wouldn't have wanted to do it," Alison adds.

"The French federation is to blame for not taking a hard line."

The only sanction handed out to Boniface for his assault is a grand fine and a slap on the wrist – and Sorby's on-track antics during the Saturday Main as he uses his bike to stop Mike Alessi before grabbing the Californian are downright disgusting.

Incredibly, the US-based Frenchman initially gets off with a warning while Jeff Alessi is fined a grand and eliminated from the rest of the weekend's racing. His crime? To stop to pull Sorby off his brother.

"We couldn't even protest against Jeff's exclusion and fine," explains Alison. "They had told us to go to bed, there would be no decision until they could watch the tape on Sunday and then we were out of time and cannot get a

revision for a fortnight."

Just 20 minutes before Sunday qualification – having finally watched the tape which millions have seen live and has even been repeated over the house video screens – the jury finally excludes Sorby and 10 minutes later Mike Alessi is in the stadium, ready to race.

"I don't know what the deal was with either of them. After Leuret here last year and then Glen Helen I'm making a conscious attempt to ride aggressive but clean and I don't know what it was with either Boniface or Sorby. I never even saw either of them in racing."

And racing begins so promisingly on Friday. Sorby starts the weekend with two wins in 30 minutes – the SX Tour and the first heat – and Sebastien Tortelli takes the second heat with Boniface third as the Lariviere effort to bring back their best émigrés to the States promises to pay dividends in the Franco-American wars.

The later actions against the Alessi brothers are personal – trouble follows Mike and Jeff wherever they go but they are innocent at Bercy.

The aggression starts after Boniface has screwed up exiting turn three in the Friday Main. Video footage confirms that there is no contact with Alessi who's in front anyway and Mike could never have made the triple if they

The action starts the moment the gate drops with Brown (#3), Tortelli (#1), Short (#29), Jeff (#801) and Mike Alessi (#800) fighting for position into the first turn



High flying action in the Palais Omnisports



Tortelli misses his brake chasing Mikey



Tortelli's return to Bercy is a popular move



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Mikey soars across the triple as Boniface takes a dive at the start of the Friday Main



had touched – it's difficult on Friday, so difficult that only Andrew Short makes it regularly throughout the Main and Tortelli doesn't even try.

Indeed, it is the key to Short's overwhelming win. Okay, perhaps not the only key – the defending Bercy champion is unrivalled for pace through the whoops as he gives Honda's twin-pipe CR250F a maiden major win – but the leap gives him a second-a-lap over the field with even Alessi holding back after that opening lap.

Mikey is in pain having been to hospital in the afternoon after landing on his shoulder. But he rides a brilliant race to defy Tortelli second until the last time through the whoops after a multi-lap clean battle with no contact, no weaving, nothing but SX at its very best. As for Sorby? He crashes out alone and Tortelli is left to prevent a US sweep of the top six.

Boniface comes out firing on Saturday, taking second to Short in their heat, Tortelli wins the second, Boissiere and Musquin the recharge and the French are strutting.

Short takes the lead from Alessi through the whoops and Tortelli is quickly on his SoCal training partner – but then all hell lets loose.

Boniface, passed cleanly by Jeff Alessi for fourth, throws it away in the tunnel and sits on a haybale. Tortelli misses the rear brake, stuffs his KTM into the haybales and is just inches away from a 30ft drop onto concrete. Sorby, now fourth, waits in the tunnel for Mike Alessi, leaving his bike in the US teenager's path at the apex of the turn – live on TV!

The producer switches to another camera as Jeff pulls to a halt to help his brother so Mike can rejoin the action. The race is still going on, Short's lead by now must be half-a-lap and after his 'delay' there's no way Mike Alessi is going to reduce that – although his eventual second ahead of Mike Brown after Tortelli's bike dies is a fine finish. Last Frenchie still standing is Pierre-Alexandre Renet in fifth. Without him the Yanks would have taken top seven!

As the front three go to the podium the stadium screens replay the Sorby incident. But the jury aren't looking and when they convene they appear to believe Sorby's version of events – he tells them he did it as revenge for Tortelli who he thinks has been stuffed by Alessi – and exclude Jeff.

By noon on Sunday the officials have finally

watched the tape and Sorby is out too, Boniface has withdrawn and the final day of racing goes ahead almost without incident.

Short (remember him?) is going for six straight wins but he gets chopped off the gate by Billy Laninovich while Tortelli goes under Brownie for the lead at turn three. But the red flags are out! A quartet of Frenchmen lay in the track at turn one and Renet has to be stretched off.

Tortelli blows the start in the rerun, Short leads Alessi past Brown for his second straight sweep of Bercy, Sebastien gets to third and immediately washes out jumping into a turn and the first French team member home is Fabien Izoird in 10th as Alexandre Rouis is riding for Tunisia to make up the Rest of the World numbers.

Brad Turner doesn't get to ride his first Bercy after cracking two ribs and spraining a wrist in Friday training but Andy Pringle puts the MotoVision spare tyre on Nev Bradshaw's rear wheel for the Last Chance and the South African responds by making the Main and riding home a solid 11th before adding a 14th on Sunday.

Laninovich is fourth in the fight to win King of Bercy



Jeff Gibson takes fifth on the Sunday



The Nevster makes the cut two times outta three







IVAN'S THE MAN

**With no Knight in sight
Cervantes is the rider to
beat at the Barcelona
Indoor Enduro**

Words and photo by Jonty Edmunds

IVAN CERVANTES shows exactly why he's Spain's number one enduro rider as the newly-crowned Enduro 1 world champ dominates the sixth running of the end-of-season Barcelona Indoor Enduro aboard his 250cc four-stroke factory KTM.

In front of 14,000 motorcycle-crazed fans, Cervantes dominates the Enduro 1 class – winning each of the four class heats before going on to win the end-of-night Super Final.

"This means more to me than winning the world championship," confesses an emotional Cervantes after the race. "So many of my friends and family have come to see me race here. I can't explain how it feels to have won in front of them."

There's never any doubt that Cervantes will top the Enduro 1 class as after a stunning opening race win he goes on to top race two just as convincingly, despite a momentary lapse of concentration that sees him fall.

Getting the holeshot once again in race three before powering towards the chequered flag in the fourth and final race, Ivan proves once more just how fast he is by claiming another convincing win and transferring through into the Main Event as the rider to beat.

Behind Cervantes, Honda rider Arnau Vilanova follows his countryman home in each of the four races while Italian Alessandro Belometti finishes his first ever Barcelona Indoor Enduro in a strong third place.

In the Enduro 2 class victory is split between two Finns – E2 world champion Samuli Aro and US GNCC champion Juha Salminen. With Aro not putting a foot wrong in the opening two races, he then relaxes a little too much in the third and fourth races and misses the podium both times out while Salminen gets his act together and starts winning races.

"I had a great start to the night winning the first two races," admits Aro, "but then I eased off

too much and started making mistakes. I'm still happy with the way I rode though because last year I didn't even finish all my races."

Despite topping the third and fourth races, Juha Salminen only manages to finish in fifth after two disastrous opening races. Claiming the overall runner-up spot is Mr Consistency – Alessandro Botturi from Italy. Only missing the podium in one of the four races, Botturi finishes just one point behind Aro and ahead of a third KTM rider, Frenchman Fabien Planet.

With Enduro 3 world champion David Knight not competing in Barcelona local man Xavier Galindo does all the winning, placing first three times and as runner-up once. Finishing ahead of factory KTM rider Marko Tarkkala in the E3 class overall results, the pair are joined by Oriol Mena aboard his Gas Gas on the podium.

"I saw Ivan win his first race and just tried my best to do the same," reckons former trials rider Galindo. "I felt really good on the track and got great starts which really helped me. It would have been nice to have won all the races but to finish ahead of Tarkkala is what I wanted to do."

With the best three riders from each of the three classes all competing head-to-head in the Super Final, Cervantes puts one over the competition to claim the win after a near perfect ride. Starting well, making no mistakes and loving every minute of leading the race in front of his home crowd, the flamboyant Spaniard adds the Main Event win to his four E1 class victories.

"It's incredible," enthuses Cervantes. "Winning my E1 races was great but this is even better. It's an amazing feeling to have beaten so many great riders and to have done it in front of my home crowd."

Behind Cervantes Alessandro Botturi claims another runner-up finish on his farewell ride for the Farioli KTM team while Xavier Galindo rounds out the podium in third.



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CRAIC TROOPS!

A pair of action-packed nights at Belfast's Odyssey Arena show just how frickin' good UK supercross can be

Words and photos by Sully

IT'S LITTLE wonder that ex AMA National champ Mike Brown calls it "the best supercross in Europe" as once again Events 22's Belfast International Supercross does its bit to remind us just how frickin' great indoor scramble bike racing in the UK has the potential to be!

And for once it's not all the glitz and glamour that have us salivating for more. The dancing girls are done away with and instead it's action all the way as seven salacious scraps filled with bar-banging, brain-blitzing and, at times, ball-bruising racing are backed up by four high-flying freestylers, a cast of celebrity minibikers, 12 ten-year olds on 65s and even a four-lap demo by Ireland's leading quad god!

Matt Bates and his crew once again pull out all the stops – as well as the hammered Events 22 cheque book – to ensure an international entry of note are present in the Odyssey.

Ex-world champ Sebastien Tortelli leads the entry list in SX2 while transatlantic challengers Marco Dube and Ironman Jacob Saylor battle it out with GP winners Billy Mac and Carl Nunn and future stars Tommy Searle and Neville Bradshaw for second spot behind the flying Frenchman who goes six for six in the two nights' SX2 heats.

Downtown Mike Brown does a similar job of destroying the opposition in SX1 as the resident of Piney Flats, Tennessee, dominates proceedings ahead of current Bookoo Arenacross series leader Josh Woods, Saylor and brand new Belfast hero Martin Barr.

Barr's awesome all weekend and the local phenomenon shows little fear as he battles his way into the hearts of the crowd. Meanwhile, Martin's Bike-It Dixon Yamaha team-mate and former Odyssey winner Gordon Crockard is



belfast SX

*Downtown Mike Brown
leads both Mains before
Tortelli blows by*





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Ironman Jacob Saylor jumps past local hero Phil McCullough



Martin Barr gives the home fans plenty to cheer about

struggling and the Ulsterman gets taken down more than once by other riders before managing to crash all on his own while leading one of Saturday's heats – d'oh!

While there's plenty of action in the heats it's the mixed-capacity Main Events that really matter as the top six from SX1 and SX2 battle it out in two 15-lap finals. While 15 laps might sound like a fair few you've gotta remember that with a 25-second lap it's gonna be a done deal in less than seven minutes and that makes for some intense action.

Mike Brown snaps from the gate and into an early lead in Friday's Main while Woods and former British supercross champ Neil Prince separate Brown from the leading SX2 riders Saylor and Searle. Tortelli's mired midpack but Dyno's on the move as he blows by Saylor and Woods to catch up with Brownie.

The Bike-It Dixon boys are battling over fifth

with Searle until Crockard and Tommy play pinball. "Gordon came past me but I went up the inside in the turn before the finish," reckons Tommy. "He was on the outside line and I thought he was gonna stay there but he turned back in and we hit pretty hard."

The impact's enough to kill the radiator on Gordy's bike so that just leaves Barr and Billy to battle it out for best Bike-It rider home and there are no holds barred as a personal bet between the two needs to be settled. "I bet Martin a Mars bar I could beat him," laughs Billy. "He was right in front of me and I thought 'right I'm gonna go for it' then I came into the finish line corner and lost the front end."

Tortelli's finally caught Brown at the front and all eyes are firmly focussed on the leading pair as Sebastien simply powers past the American Rockstar Suzuki rider on the factory KTM. "It was pretty tough to catch Mike,"

reckons Tortelli. "It must have been pretty exciting for the public though." And if the ever increasing volume of the Odyssey crowd is anything to go by then Sebastien's not wrong!

Woods is pleased to finish third on his 450 Suzuki on Friday but there's better to come from the man from Michigan as he'll go one better the next night.

Again it's Brown who nails the start in Saturday's Main Event and once more Sebastien has to do his bit to catch up. This time it takes the Frenchman a little longer to get to the front as less than 0.1 of a second separates the leading pair's lap times!

But even though there's a battle raging for first most of the partisan crowd's attention is with homeboy Barr who's been more entertaining tonight than he has all year!

And Martin's increased form is doing his teeth and Billy Mac's wallet no good as



Breville Nadshaw goes 6-5 in the two Main Events

there's yet another wager in place between the pair. "I bet him another Mars bar – double or quits," jokes Billy who can do no better than eighth tonight as he provides the filling in a Crockard/Glen Phillips sandwich. "I guess I owe him two Mars bars now." Great maths Billy!

That chocolatey bar of nougat and caramel goodness probably tastes all the sweeter to Martin as he also pockets the third and final podium spot with just two corners to go as he passes a stricken Brown who's gone down all by himself in the next to last left-hander.

It's Woods who stands one step above Barr on the podium and he's pretty pleased with his first trip to Ireland even though it took him a lot longer than he anticipated to get here. "I got here late after missing my connecting flight in New York," admits Josh. "It took me too long to get going in the Main but once I did I had the speed to be up front. I'm happy – I stayed safe, avoided the big crashes and had a lot of fun."

And that sentiment of having fun is something that each and every race fan who attended either – or even both – night's action will savour until the next one. It's just a damn shame we've got to wait another 12 months!

So come on Matt, how about bringing us a full-on UK supercross series just like back in the good old days...

Billy Mac's form costs him a brace of Mars bars



And what about...

THE NIPPERS

If it wasn't for the Crazy Frog soundtrack that accompanies the 65cc races they'd be absolutely corking. Local lad Simon Reid beats British interlopers James Dunne and Malachi Mitchell-Thomas to the overall with some good consistent riding.

THE FREESTYLERS

The Skin Industries/Freestylextreme.com supported UKFMX team featuring Disco Dave Wiggins, Chris Brock, Danny Veale and the glamour-boy Gary Taylor himself play an absolute blinder in showing us what FMX is all about and Brock even throws down the first back-flip ever seen live in the Odyssey Arena.

THE CELEBRITIES

Two bona fide TV stars, a rapidly expanding ex-world champion MX racer and a whole bunch of motorcycle celebrities take to the track on both nights in the entirely entertaining minibike races.

Derby's Jamie Dobb wins both races outright but in the much hyped battle of the soap stars it's Coronation Street's Ryan Thomas who beats off Emmerdale's Kelvin Fletcher in a battle royale with cheese. In case you're wondering who the hell they are then here's the lowdown...

Kelvin plays the part of Andy Sugden in Emmerdale – he's a farmer or something – while Jason plays the part of a builder named Todd who's currently having it away with both Sarah Platt (I'd hit that three times) and Violet Wilson (yep and her too). Lucky bar-steward!

JUSTIN REID

Some Irish dude with two extra wheels and a thumb throttle invades the Odyssey come Saturday night and proceeds to nail the big finish line double – good work crazy four-wheeled, fumb-frotling fella!

THE FANS

Supercross is nothing without spectators who are having a good time and the Odyssey is full of them for two nights running. Plenty of pre-event advertising and sensibly priced tickets help make that a reality and we're sure a world-class line-up that includes a whole host of talented locals does no harm either. See you there next year!



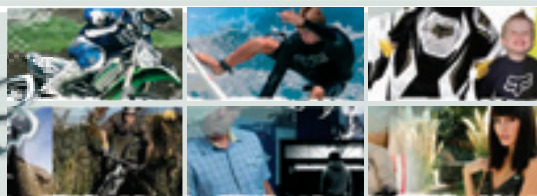
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Dobby wins both the minibike races



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RAGING BULL!

KIRK RICHARDS – THE
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RAGING BULL!

RAGE CATCHES UP WITH KIRK RICHARDS, A YOUNG MAN FROM THE VALLEYS OF SOUTH WALES WHO'S ALWAYS IN A BIT OF A HURRY...

If you want pure excitement when watching racing then 15-year-old Kirk Richards from Merthyr Tydfil in South Wales is your man. Kirk won the 2005 BSMA big-wheeled 85cc championship in convincing style. Many riders dread lining up against Raging Bull as he takes no prisoners and will do almost anything to win – even if it means taking himself to the limit and crashing. If you could tame that side of his racing you could have a future British champion. And to top it all he's a good kid!

DBR: How's it going Kirk?
KR: "It's going good thanks Ray."

DBR: The outdoor season has now finished – what have you planned for the winter?

KR: "Well, for the winter I'm practising a lot in deep sand at the beach not too far away from me which will build up my stamina and fitness for the new season. I'm not really racing as much now as it's the winter but in February I'm going to Spain for two weeks with James Cole and his dad."

DBR: What sort of off-bike training do you do?

KR: "I go to a local gym which is called Rydyicar with my mates Rory, Dixie and Mason. I also have an exercise bike in my house and for Christmas I'm getting a multigym so my fitness will be good for the new season. I do a little bit of weights but that's only for muscle

tone and strength which will help me with the bigger bike."

DBR: Okay Arnie, 2006 will see you on the 125cc bikes.

KR: "You won't see me on the four-bangers this year because I'm simply not strong enough at the moment so it's 125s all the way – either Honda or KTM so I'm open to all offers!"

DBR: What's the best track you've ever ridden and why?

KR: "The best track I've ridden has got to be a track in Malaga in Spain. I don't know the name of the track but it's on the side of the motorway – it's really hardpack with lots of jumps, it's pretty cool. I went there in 2000 on a 65cc when foot and mouth was at its worst in the UK."

DBR: How come you didn't enter the BYMX championship in 2005?

KR: "Unfortunately, I bust my shoulder on a training day with Dave Thorpe crashing off a tabletop – I didn't know if it was going to be pinned and I couldn't get in as I left it too late and only just got into the BSMA series. I think I was 15th reserve which was pointless but I did do a round of the BYMX at Pontrilas as a wild card which was good."

DBR: In five years time where do you see yourself?

KR: "I hope to see myself competing in the British championship and hopefully having a go at GPs – I would be so proud to race in the British championship and to qualify at a GP

would be a real dream come true for me."

DBR: If you were not racing motocross, what other sport would you be doing?

KR: "Rugby most probably because when I was on a small-wheeled 85 I used to play for my school team and then I was picked for a team called Cefn Coed. But I was always racing on a Sunday so it was impossible but I still went every Wednesday night with my mate Rory to train and keep myself fit."

DBR: Who's the fastest person you've ever raced and why?

KR: "Tommy Searle definitely – I raced him in the 60s and 80s. I think the last time I raced him was in 2002 and he was quick to race against then, I just can't imagine how fast he is now. He's an awesome rider to win the British Under 21s and score good points in the GPs in his first adult season."

DBR: What's the best and worst part of motocross?

KR: "The best part of motocross has got to be winning – it's a brilliant feeling – and the worst has got to be having a big crash and then panicking to get back into the top 10 and then crashing again."

DBR: Now it's your turn Kirk to thank whoever you like...

KR: "I would like to thank my mum and dad and all my family, Tony Houseman for tuning my bikes, APS Deliveries, Motovision, McBurney Civils, K-Tech suspension and D&N Shot Blasting Services Ltd (Frank).



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WINWINWIN!

SIGNED STU FLOCKHART SHIRT UP FOR GRABS

What's the best way to end a fantastic year of Rage? How about a brilliant competition from our friends at MotoX TV.

To win a signed and framed shirt belonging to Stuart 'Disco' Flockhart all you need to do is answer this easy question but there's a twist – the twist is you need to log onto www.motox.tv and watch the video with Disco!

Okay, the question is... What gear does Disco hit the whoops in?

- A) First
- B) Second
- C) Third
- D) Fourth
- E) Fifth
- F) A nice pair of tailored jeans and a cheesecloth shirt

Once you think you know write down your answer on the back of a postcard or sealed envelope along with your name, address and a daytime phone number and send it to us at Rage Comp, DBR, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe, Lancs LA4 4AG.

Entries close on January 6 with the first correct entry drawn at random getting the framed shirt.

COMMENT

FIRSTLY, I would like to thank all the riders for all their help throughout the year – without you guys (and all my fellow crazies at DBR HQ in Outer Mongolia) this column wouldn't be possible! How do you put up with me?

As you're reading this I'm just back from the USA where I've been attending the World Mini Olympics in Florida. I still can't understand why the Americans call it the Olympics but then they do have the World Series for baseball with only their own teams entered. Keep your eyes peeled for a full report from this six-day event sometime in the New Year.

Christmas is only days away now and I wonder what Santa is dropping down my chimney this year? Hopefully a new camera or lens – but I doubt it! More like socks and hankies...

It's been a good year for racing and hopefully 2006 will follow in the same fashion – highlight for me was Steven Clarke winning his world championship closely followed by me meeting Ricky Carmichael.

Well there are only a few words to say now and that's merry Christmas and a happy and safe New Year. And remember, turkey tastes better with cranberry sauce!

Until next time – safe riding!


Chuss

Got any youth news for Rage?
Give Ray Chuss a bell on 07773 609994 or
email him at dbryoutheditor@raychuss.com




JORDAN HOLLIDAY

AGE: 9
BIKE: KTM65SX ('04 & '05), YZ85 ('03)
YEARS RACING: 3
KIT: FOX, ARAI AND ALPINESTARS
NUMBER OF TROPHIES: 57
TITLES: 1
BROKEN BONES: NONE
TRUCK/VAN: RIMOR



ASHLEY WILDE

AGE: 15
BIKE: SANDIFORDS 250F HONDA
YEARS RACING: 8
KIT: SINISALO
NUMBER OF TROPHIES: 321
TITLES: 7
BROKEN BONES: 2
TRUCK/VAN: AUCKLAND RACE TRUCK



CHAMPSCHAT

THIS MONTH...BSMA JUNIOR CHAMPION ROBBIE MUSCAT

“It's been really busy in the last few months. I've moved onto the small-wheeled 85cc Honda – I think it's the best bike ever. It's been set up and real fast compared to my 65cc.

“Depending on the weather I'm off to Europe with the Hanson team for some winter training and maybe if I'm real lucky a trip to the USA. After winning the BSMA championship Oxtar have sent my boots which I'm happy about – cheers guys.

“I have lots of things planned for next year but I'm waiting for the 2006 national regs to come out so we can sit down and plan it all. My dad's looking for a new race truck and I hope he hurries up as I'm fed up with greasy chips from the burger vans.

“I can't wait to get to the Dirt Bike Show at Stoneleigh so I can pick up my British Masters third place trophy – and hopefully bump into Chussy for a pic. I would like to thank all my sponsors and wish all my family and friends a merry Christmas and a happy New Year – see you all in 2006...”

MYBESTTRACE

My best race this month comes from double series champion Jamie McCanney. Jamie won both the BYMX and British Masters titles and now steps up to the small-wheeled 85s for the 2006 season. Over to you Jamie...

“My best race was at Desertmartin in Ireland this year. I got the holeshot and pulled a small gap on Paul Coates. On the last lap I felt comfortable and was riding really smooth, picking my way past backmarkers – then I went to pass a rider on the outside but he went straight across all the ruts and wiped me out.

“By the time I was up and running Paul was past me – with one more corner to go I put my head down and went for it. Luckily, Paul got stuck behind a backmarker going into the doubles – he rolled them and I doubled them and that's what got me the win by less than a second. It was great!”



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
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back passage

TROUBLE SEEMS TO FOLLOW MIKE ALESSI AROUND AND THE 17-YEAR-OLD FROM SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA IS THE FIRST TO ADMIT THAT HE DIDN'T ARRIVE ON THE PRO SCENE JUST OVER 12 MONTHS AGO LOOKING TO MAKE FRIENDS.

IN 2004 AT BERCY HE MADE HIS MARK ON EUROPE WITH PODIUM FINISHES...AND A LAST-LAP 'BLOCK' ON PASCAL LEURET THAT LEFT THE FRENCH PUBLIC SEETHING. THEN THERE WERE A NUMBER OF 'INCIDENTS' DURING THE '05 AMA OUTDOOR NATS CULMINATING IN HIS FARCICAL CLASH WITH IVAN TEDESCO AT THE FINAL ROUND AT GLEN HELEN THAT COST HIM THE PRESTIGIOUS ROOKIE OF THE YEAR AWARD.

BUT NOTHING SO FAR CAN COMPARE WITH THE TREATMENT HANDED OUT TO MIKE AND YOUNGER BROTHER JEFF BY US-BASED FRENCHMEN STEVE BONIFACE AND ERIC SORBY AT BERCY IN '05.

Words and photo by Alex Hodgkinson

DBR: Trouble seems to follow you around Mike – but this time I don't think anyone in their right mind can claim that you did anything wrong.

MA: "You know, after what happened here with Pascal Leuret last year and then Glen Helen I've been making a conscious attempt to be a clean rider at all times. I'm still trying to ride aggressively but not like last year. I might show a wheel or bang bars but I don't go in and take anyone out anymore."

DBR: So what was going on out there?

MA: "I still don't know what's happening out there. All I can tell you is how my races ran. The first night I got the holeshot and Short got me right in the whoops. That was pretty much my weak part of the track – I crashed in the afternoon practice, hurt my shoulder and needed to go to hospital and it was hurting for the rest of the day.

"I then had a really good race with Tortelli – particularly in the last five laps – and he finally got me in the whoops on the last lap. I'm not too disappointed about getting passed on the last lap of a long, hard race by a two times world champion. I rode well – particularly with my shoulder the way it is – and we had a good clean fight.

"Then I went back to the pits after the podium and all hell let loose. I still don't know what it was with Boniface. I can say with a clear conscience that I never did anything to him. I never even saw him all race but he was mad about something and just started

punching me in the pits. I don't know if he got confused and he had something with Jeff – I just don't know.

"My shoulder only hurt a little bit on the second day and didn't trouble me anymore but Short got me again in the whoops after I holeshot. Sebastien got on me much earlier than the day before but I was still a bike length clear and suddenly he wasn't there anymore. He told me afterwards that he missed the rear brake but at that point I was the loneliest guy out there. I couldn't really see Short for first and I couldn't see third, then all of a sudden Sorby was waiting for me out in the back section. He gets off his bike and ghost rides it into me, then he gets in my face and starts punching me and yelling at me and if it wasn't for my brother I wouldn't have been able to get out of there at all. Jeff stopped to pull him off me, or I don't know what would have happened.

"I only know what Jeff told me about what happened after I got going again but I was in third and then Sebastien's bike broke and I got second.

"I don't know what the deal was with Sorby. I don't know if he thinks I hit him or something but I was nowhere near him on the gate and I holeshot so how could we have touched? Anyway, I'm glad I don't have to race either Boniface or Sorby in the SX. I will be riding West and they are both on the East."

DBR: I heard that you lost races in the States this year because you would start switching lines if someone came up behind you and that would cost you. But in your battles with Tortelli out there this weekend you have kept your lines and Sebastien could only get past you once – and even that was on the last lap of a long race when you were suffering with your shoulder.

MA: "I think it's just about learning more since the outdoors. I've learnt a lot and am putting it to good use now. When someone came up behind me I would change lines to defend rather than riding my own race and that was costing me. I have the speed and the talent to win and I have shown every night battling with Sebastien that I can race with the best. Our races were all good and clean and I really enjoy riding with him during the week at KTM's practice track in Corona too."

DBR: The crowd on Sunday at Bercy was particularly antagonistic towards you at the presentation. Do you think that goes back to what happened last year with Leuret?

MA: "I have no problems with Pascal. We talked about it afterwards and he asked me if he could have my gear so I gave it to him. I felt bad about him losing the podium completely so I gave him my prize money too. We're okay with each other now."



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